



Midwest Foster Care and
Adoption Association
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd
Independence, MO
64055



Special Double Issue!

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MFC  **AA**

6th Annual Conference
October 14 & 15, 2008

Integrate! Innovate! Collaborate!
Services for Children
and their Many Families

DETAILS ON PGS. 9-11



Sponsored by 
College of Arts & Sciences
and School of Social Work

MFCAA 6TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE. *Children placed in foster care or for adoption have many families. They and their families must negotiate a complex web of legal representatives, educators, and mental health or social service providers. This two-day conference brings together these parents and those working with them to learn from each other, to improve their collaboration, and to discover ways to better integrate their efforts.*



CONFERENCE GOALS

- Support service integration
- Share innovative approaches
- Identify when and how to preserve family relationships
- Clarify roles and improve collaboration to protect children

Justin Newkirk, MSW
MFCAA
816-350-0215
justin@mfcaa.org

Rosalyn Bertram, PhD
UMKC
816-235-1026
rbertram@umkc.edu

WHO SHOULD PRESENT & PARTICIPATE

- Parents of all sorts (biological, foster, adoptive & kinship parents)
- Children's Division staff & supervisors
- Child & family advocates
- Lawyers, judges, & juvenile officers
- Counselors, therapists, & their supervisors
- School administrators, teachers & support staff
- Students in social work & related studies

more info inside!

MFC^{AA}

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association Newsletter



Letter From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As you know, MFC^{AA} staff, me included, spend numerous hours working with foster and adoptive parents to try to solve problems. Problems we tackle may be worker/foster parent personality clashes, GAL/foster parent clashes, problems with accessing services, problems managing kids behaviors, problems getting educational needs met, etc... Whatever the problem, the solution is frequently found in utilizing effective communication to spur reasonable compromise. Child welfare is a people business. People are emotionally invested in this work. You all know how deeply we love the kids who come to our homes. We witness their struggles and their triumphs. We cheer for them and we challenge them to move forward. We believe in the possibility that they can live happy lives some day. Workers, lawyers, therapists and other professionals also care deeply about the children they work to protect. They get up each day and try to meet the needs of way too many needy people.

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JUNE BONUS



We find easy ways for you to save money. **Interested?**

Are your kids feeling the itch for some summer excitement? All of these KC area activities are FREE!

Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead. The 12-acre park has farm animals, beautiful gardens, a country schoolhouse, fishing pond, and horse drawn wagon rides and pony rides.. 913-897-2360

Kaleidoscope is the brain child of Hallmark Cards' Don Hall, who dreamt of a place where kids could 'explore, create, imagine and do'. The magical atmosphere allows you and your kids to create art from left over Hallmark materials. Sessions last 40min. FREE tickets 9:30 each morning in the Kaleidoscope lobby at Crown Center.

The Kansas City Northern Railroad is perfect for kids who love trains. The restored miniature trains choo-choo around a half-mile track to the joy of all those riding. Weekends/60th & Waukomis (North).

The Children's Peace Pavilion, located in Independence teaches children about peace through understanding, learning, and fun. This free spot has everything from art stations, mazes and puzzles to hands on activities, nature cave, underwater castle and a giant kaleidoscope. (816) 521-3033

TESTIMONIAL of success!

Thank you for supporting MFC^{AA}.

Together, we are accomplishing great things.

"Friday night my daughter and I went to Fuddrucker's for Dinner. A young man came out from the kitchen just beaming, and introduced himself as Ryan. He said he was in my job training class (the first one we did at MFC^{AA}), and he used the information he got to get a job there, and he said, "it pays pretty good." He asked where I worked and how old you have to be to get on there, so I gave him my company's information so that when he turns 18 he can apply there.

I felt so proud and happy. We have made a difference! It made me feel great, my daughter even said, "I can tell that just made your night." And it did!!" - Thomas D. Wilson

Contact Justin for teen-training info. 816-350-0215

MFC^{AA} CONTACT & DIRECTIONS:

From I-70, take the Lee's Summit Rd Exit and go North, drive for about a mile, and we are located on the West side of the road (across from a park, just before 32nd), on the Drumm Farm campus. We are part of a collection of "houses" set back from the road. Stay to the right of the drive; MFC^{AA} is the second building on the right.

Address:

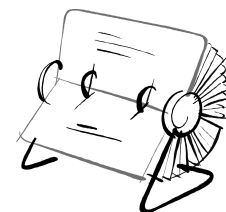
3210 S
Lee's Summit Rd
Independence, MO
64055

Main Phone:

816-350-0215

Website:

www.mfcaa.org



5th Annual Ribs for Kids— BIG SUCCESS!!

Once again Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association's favorite, and Kansas City's tastiest, fundraiser, *Ribs for Kids*, was a great success! On May 3rd, from the chilly dawn of the morning through the warm sunshine of the afternoon, the parking lot at McGonigle's Grocery at 79th and Ward Parkway was overflowing with friends and supporters of MFCAA. *We appreciate the effort of everyone who came out and supported the families of MFCAA by purchasing ribs and making donations.*



Over 3,500 slabs of ribs were sold! Many thanks to all who participated. We are very grateful to the McGonigle family and employees for all of their hard work. Thanks to McGonigle's, not only did we sell an incredible amount of ribs, but this event introduced MFCAA to many within the Kansas City community.

Thank You MFCAA

Friends- With much gratitude we would like to recognize additional individuals that showed their support of MFCAA and Ribs for Kids through their donations to *Vision for Change*.

*Special Friends (\$200-\$499) **Generous Friends (\$500-\$999)

Elizabeth Alex
Allied Construction Services, Inc.*
Allied Refrigeration*
Mary & Edmund Brackett
Wendy Burcham*
Rose & Robert Chinnery
Copilevitz & Canter
Jeanette Evans-Hamilton
Martha & John Franke **
Sandra & Edward Fried
Donald & Adele Hall**
Chrissa Hoffmeier
Isle of Capri Casino**
Kansas City Wizards*
Stanley & Harriet Kaz

Michele Kerwin
Steve Kirschbaum*
Bruce & Gayle Krigel
Willie & Sandra
Lawrence*
Beth & Mike Liss
Gary Long*
Robert & Molly Merrigan*
George & Babs Morris*
Terry & Victoria Olson*
Beth Burnett &
Greg Patterson
Beth & Mike Thomas**
Richard Van Auken
VML Foundation**
Julie & Stan Welding
Bill & Gail Wien*

Ribs for Kids Volunteers

We are very grateful and offer a round of applause to the many volunteers who helped prepare ribs for several days before the event. Additional heroes who deserve our thanks are the many who volunteered the day of the event, directing traffic, handing out brochures, making sandwiches and directing customer lines. This was truly a great and successful team effort.

Theodore Dean
Keith Pence
Mitch Crane
David Kierst
Gary Amerine
Charles Rhinehart
Mary Le Febvre
Leah Le Febvre
Dwight Norris
Joe Carle
Maureen Lawrie

Fred Holtz
Shawn O'Kelley
Gary Hisch
Mary Lewis
Dexter Brown
Devorah Fields
Hazel Williams
Regina Thompson
Diane Shelby-Howard
Melanie Roberts

Dana Smith
Claudia Nelson
Lillian Gardner
Joy Edwards
Amy Jo Sloan
Tony Walker
Pam Thurman
Ronnie Simmons
Donna Smith
Henry Klein
Steve Kirschbaum

David O'Kelley
Michael Spears
Ronald Spears
Rondez Spears
Ryan Spears
Jorgeo Spears
Montez Elbert
Lisa Brummett
Patsy Holtz
Robert Mentor
Larry LeFebvre

IMPORTANT HEALTH INFO

FOR WOMEN 9-26

The Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City, a strong supporter of the work of MFCAA, has an important initiative going on to address cancer prevention for young women between the ages of 9-26 in the Metro KC Area. Whether women and girls are covered by health insurance or not, they can receive the potential life saving HPV vaccine at no cost thanks to the support of HCF and their partner, the Reach Healthcare Foundation. More than 3,000 Kansas City women and girls have already received this vaccine since the program started in October of 2007, but the goal is to reach several thousand more. Specific locations where the free vaccine can be obtained can be found at www.mohpv.org or by calling United Way 211 (816) 474-5115. We encourage you to take advantage of this great opportunity and to share the information with the women and girls that you care about.

thanks

_____ A big thank you to all of the members of the Truman Heartland Youth Advisory Council who worked at the MFCAA office on April 26th. The group painted, policed the grounds for trash, hung clothing, swept floors, emptied trash and sorted hangers. They did a terrific job and we appreciate their help.

_____ St. Luke's United Methodist Church conducted an "undies" drive for MFCAA. We have lots of new underwear and socks in our Clothing Closet. The congregation also collected car seats, baby clothing and other baby accessories for the Clothing Closet. We appreciate the church's generous support of MFCAA.

_____ Metro Moms and First Church of the Nazarene helped with newsletters over the past couple of months. These groups folded our April and May newsletters, plus our Conference information mailing. A Big Thanks goes to all of them, from the MFCAA Staff.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

Food Pantry hours have changed.



The Food Pantry will now be open 9a to 2p on Tuesdays and Fridays. Please try to come to the Food Pantry during these hours, but always remember: if you are ever unable to make it during the scheduled Food Pantry hours, PLEASE CALL US TO SCHEDULE A BETTER TIME. We know some of you work or have appointments for your children during the regular hours, so we are always happy to take you into the Food Pantry during a time that you are available.

Becky Hughes—816-350-0215—becky@mfcaa.org



Still, they are committed to the possibility that people can improve their circumstances. They offer services designed to help people to get off drugs, find work, learn parenting techniques, etc... They don't quit caring what happens when they go home at night.

Child welfare is also a complicated business. The policy manuals and law governing child welfare are finally online, but even with that access, there are volumes of ever-changing policies to learn and understand. There are multiple systems (CD, Courts, Schools, Healthcare, Mental Health, etc...) to effectively navigate in order to be effective at serving and protecting these kids.

So, it is highly likely that emotionally charged problems will come up on a regular basis. And clearly they do, as our phones are rarely silent at MFCAA. We have a pretty good track record for helping people to solve problems. The way we do that isn't rocket science. We don't wave a magic wand and fix things. We simply communicate as effectively as possible so that reason prevails and compromise can happen in many situations.

When we hear from a family about a situation that is causing them distress we employ a basic 3 step method for involvement. First we gather information (the family shares their perspective, then we seek out the perspective of others involved in the situation so that we get a multidimensional picture of the issue). Once we have the whole picture, there are typically some fairly obvious issues that need to be addressed. We can usually see which position needs to be altered slightly to be kinder, fairer, easier to accept, more in line with practice, more reality based, within the policy or law, etc... If we take an honest look at a whole situation and see that some of the fault lies within the foster/adoptive parents control, then we first address those issues directly with the family. It's important to be able to take responsibility for our part in creating issues.

Step two, then, involves opening up a dialogue with the parties in question. In this step there are some pretty important ways to share a message without alienating the recipient further. (Emotion sometimes causes people to write fiery e-mails or to say things that reflect the nature of their hurt, not the crux of the problem). Some of you have heard me tell you to 'think like a lawyer'. When I speak with someone about writing a letter about their situation, I tell people to try to take the emotion out of the story for the most part. Write situations up chronologically. What happened first, second, third, etc...? This method allows the reader to follow along with the story from beginning to end. It's very helpful for someone who hasn't been involved to get a general overview of your experiences. When you are writing to someone you are upset with, it is especially important to follow these tried and true Dale Carnegie techniques:

1. Begin with honest appreciation and praise. Ex: "Dear Sally, I know how devoted you are to little Johnny. It's easy to see how much you care about him in the way that you speak with him when you visit him in our home."
2. Call attention to people's mistakes indirectly. "I was surprised, this morning, when I got notification from the daycare center that little Johnny's daycare authorization was not current."
3. Talk about your own mistakes before criticizing the other person. "You know how busy I am so I'm probably remembering wrong, but for some reason I thought that I had mentioned the daycare issue the last time you were out a couple of weeks ago. You know we have so much to cover during those visits."
4. Ask questions instead of giving direct orders. "I'm just wondering if there is some way to expedite the daycare approval process. Is there something you can do to cut through some of the red tape?"
5. Let the other person save face. "I'll be picking up Johnny tonight, and I'm sure the daycare director will ask me about this again. If you were able to find something out between now and then, you'd really be helping me out."
6. Praise the slightest improvement and praise every improvement.
7. Give the other person a fine reputation to live up to. "It's no wonder that my licensing worker (other foster parents, therapists, etc..) has such good things to say about you. It's so reassuring to work with someone who cares so much."
8. Use encouragement. Make the fault seem easy to correct. "I'm sure if anyone can figure out how to get this approved quickly, you can."
9. Make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest.

When we communicate our issues in ways that inspire people to work with us rather than against us, we open the door to the compromise necessary to solve most problems. That is step 3. The final step involves working WITH the other folks involved to solve the problem. In this final step, while we may not get exactly what we want, and we may walk away with a disagreement that hasn't been totally eliminated, we hope to have maintained the most important piece, the focus on what is best for the child. During the reasonable compromise part, if the adults can stay committed to doing what is right for the CHILD, then all of the rest frequently falls into place. Reasonable people, who feel respected, can often come to a compromise that allows some resolution to the problems.

Communication is a tricky process when emotions are involved. If you've ever had any significant human relationship, you know that is true. As foster and adoptive parents it is our job to be advocates for the children we care for and love. Communicating effectively is a critical piece of effective advocacy. Next time you need to solve a problem, try some of these techniques and see if it helps you the same way it helps us. And, finally a little disclaimer, there are times to write fiery emails and take strong stands. Usually, those times come when all efforts described above have been exhausted. MFCAA sometimes uses those techniques as well. However, it's just like Mama always said, "You catch more flies with honey than vinegar!"

Here's to communication!

Lori Ross, MFCAA Executive Director

KIDS & JUDGES DAY



This yearly program is open to all foster, foster-adopt, adopted, and kinship children & adolescents that could benefit from informal discussions with judges and magistrates in a non-threatening courtroom setting. Children and teens have an opportunity to tour the courthouse, have their photo taken, and ask questions.

Hello Families,

Kids and Judges day was a smashing success! The children in attendance were able to tour the court house, meet and talk to the judges and enjoy having snacks in the courtroom. The judges and the children had lots of time to get to know each other a bit and ask each other some really thought provoking questions. This opportunity was fantastic for children to be able to participate in. This was an amazing event and I want to thank everyone who made it such a success.

-Tammy Spears

Thanks to Everyone who made this event possible!

- > Judge Charles Atwell
- > Commissioner Molly Merrigan
- > Commissioner Geoffrey Allen
- > Teresa Williams
- > David Rose
- > Tiffany Hurlock
- > Nicole Henson

Why Is Kids & Judges Day Important For Your Children?

Excerpts from Child Protection Report

Child welfare and court personnel in Colorado have hit upon a unique way of getting kids more comfortable in court and letting judges know how their decisions actually affect kids...In an innovation by the Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families called "Kids and Judges Day," The inspiration for the new program came from the common feelings that professionals have observed in court-involved children — ranging from fear and misunderstanding about anything to do with the court to expressed hatred of the judges for some of their decisions. Both types of feelings occur, the coalition said, because of the lack of communication between judges and children.

Magistrate David Furman, who hosted a group of children in his court, said it was an "outstanding" program and is eagerly awaiting the next edition. Much of what the kids had to say was "incredibly searching" and emotionally charged. Furman told *CPR* he was holding back his own tears listening to a 14-year-old who admitted to making some bad decisions, but was losing hope that anyone would eventually adopt her. "Any time I get a sense of how my decisions affect kids directly, I can make better decisions," Furman said.

LOOK FOR INFO ON KIDS & JUDGES DAY '09, NEXT SPRING

MOMMY

By MICHAELA OEFFNER

MOMMY

WHEN YOU'RE HOLDING ME IN YOUR ARMS,

IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE A LITTLE GIRL AGAIN,

WHEN YOU'RE HOLDING ME SO CLOSE,

IT COMFORTS ME,

IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I CAN DO ANYTHING I SET MY MIND TO,

MOMMY I HOPE YOU KNOW,

WHEN I AM IN YOUR ARMS,

IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU MORE THAN TWO YEARS,

MORE LIKE MY WHOLE LIFE.

BECAUSE YOU'RE MY MOM,

I WROTE THIS POEM WITH ALL MY LOVE FILLED IN THESE VERY WORDS,

SO THE NEXT TIME I SAY I HATE YOU JUST LOOK AT THIS POEM,

AND KNOW THAT'S NOT TRUE!



Special Training Opportunity! Training On Special Education

Operation Breakthrough and Legal Aid are co-hosting a free training opportunity on Special Education Advocacy. The training is scheduled for Monday, June 30th, from 12:30-4:30. Well known special education advocate and author Nancy Huerta, and longtime MFCAA supporter and friend, Fred Rich from Legal Aid, will co-present. Attendees will each receive a copy of Nancy's book. Reservations are required. Please contact Maggie Weir at 756-3511, or maggie@operationbreakthrough.org.

This is a great opportunity for foster and adoptive parents to get themselves all geared up for the new school year!

About The Author... Michaela Oeffner is the 12 year old daughter of John and Melissa Oeffner. She was adopted with 3 of her siblings 2 years ago. Michaela is in the 5th grade in the Raytown School District. Besides writing poems she enjoys art, reading, playing basketball, volleyball and running with her dad.

Monthly Reminders



Foster Parents are required to maintain a certain number of training hours in order to keep their licenses, and ALL parents can use additional tools to care for the children in their homes. MFCAA provides two great resources for “parent training.”

Resource Library

MFCAA has a lending library with video tapes, dvd's, cd's and books that can be checked out and used for outside training hours. Call Tammy at 816-350-0215.

On-site Training

June 6: Monthly Training/6:30p—DR. ROSALYN BERTRAM/*ENGAGING FAMILIES*

This course will focus on the strengths perspective and understanding the process of the family life cycle. Foster parents will be encouraged to consider the stage specific tasks that the biological family is addressing, how strengths & constraints may emerge around addressing those tasks, and how it compares with their own family and the foster kids they are taking care of. Additionally, this course will focus on understanding Minuchin, Minuchin & Colapinto's model for engaging foster families with biological parents. (childcare provided)

June 20: Career/Behavioral Training_6:30p dinner (please RSVP)/7p Meeting

SUSAN PEACH/*STRUCTURING SAFETY WITH SEXUAL PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS*

Helping parents understand the needs of children who have been sexually abused. Increasing the parent's base of knowledge can help more effectively treat children and help prevent the creation of new victims. (childcare provided)

Support Groups: Tuesdays and Thursdays/5p

MFCAA hosts lots of support groups for children, teens and parents. Contact Justin at 816-350-0215 or justin@mfcaa.org for more information.

Garage Sales Fill The Clothes Closet

Garage Sales are a great place to pick up items for our Clothes Closet. You can have some fun and help MFCAA at the same time. You may find great stuff you can buy at a great price (make sure it's in good shape), to drop by our Clothes Closet. Or leave our name and number at the garage sales you visit, and tell them they can call us to pick up gently used left over clothes, kid's furniture items, books and games. SPECIAL REMINDER: As your kids finish school and leave behind uniforms that won't fit next year, save them for us! Our foster and adoptive parents will have kids that can use them next fall.

MFCAA's clothing closet provides clothing, shoes, coats, toys, high chairs, car seats and more to our members. Clothing Closet hours are from 10a-2p on Tuesdays and Fridays.



Plan Ahead...

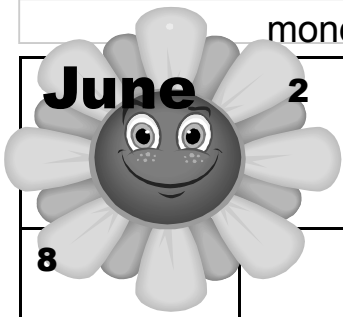










It's getting close to School Supplies Drive time... and before you know it, we'll be in the middle of our Christmas Adopt-A-Family program. If you have a few hours during the day in August, we'd love to have your help organizing and passing out school supplies. Call Becky at 816-350-0215 for more info, or look for days and times in our July newsletter... and if you're good at asking for donations, we might be able to send you out in the name of MFCAA—just let us know and we'll get you started.

Summer Fun = More Food

When the kids are home for the summer, the grocery bill goes up! Summer is a great time to donate food to the Food Pantry; more kids at home all day means more meals to plan for our foster and adoptive families. You don't have to bring a whole load of groceries. Buy an extra bag of apples at the store and bring them by—if 20 people do that, 20 families can enjoy fresh fruit!

MFCAA's Food Pantry is now open from 9 AM to 2 PM on Tuesdays and Fridays* for basic items. If you cannot make it during those hours, or If you need extended or specific items, please contact Becky for an appointment. *1st Friday of each month: the Food Pantry is only available at 6p, (before Training). becky@mfcaa.org or 816-350-0215



	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday	
	2	3 	4	5	6  	7	
	8	10 	11	12	13 	14	
	15	16	17  DENTAL VAN	18	19	20  	21
	22	23	24 	25	26	27  MFCOA COOKOUT & POOL PARTY-6p	28
	29	30					



Clothes Closet
10a-2p



Food Pantry
NEW HOURS
9a-2p

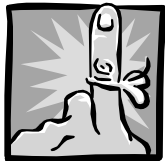


Training
6:30p



Career/Behavioral
Training—7p
(6:30p dinner)

For Dental Van Appointments:
Bobbie Mitchell/ 816-889-3512



Don't Forget...

Our **Summer Family Event** is this month! Plan to attend our Cookout & Pool Party on June 27th. We'll eat first, then head to the pool. If you want to swim, you **HAVE TO BE AT THE POOL BY 7:30p**. We've reserved the pool just for our party, and that means we all have to go in as a group at 7:30p. You can't get in after 7:30p, and once you leave you can't come back.

Details:

Cost: ONLY \$5 PER FAMILY (you can pay at the park)
Dinner: 6p—*Please Bring a Side Dish Or Dessert To Share* (don't forget a serving utensil, and you may want to put your name on your container). You might also want a lawn chair, in case we run out of picnic table space. We will provide meat, chips, drinks and plates/ plasticware.

Pool Party: 7:30p-9p

Location: Baumgardner Park and Centennial Pool in Blue Springs (2401 Ashton Dr)

RSVP: NO LATER THAN JUNE 10th. Email or call Suzen (816-350-0215/suzen@mfcga.org) and let her know how many people will be eating, and how many people will be swimming.

We can't wait to see you all there!

Respite Reminder

Adoptive parents, where are you?

We are having a great response to our respite referral program from foster parents, but we are still waiting to hear from parents in need of respite care for adopted kids. Also, if you have an application to be a respite provider or to be included on our respite referral list, please complete it and return it as soon as possible. The application is important because it lets us know what kids you are interested in caring for, and for new applicants, it starts the process of you becoming a provider.

As always, if you are interested in being a respite care provider or if you are in need of respite care, call Suzen at (816) 350-0215.

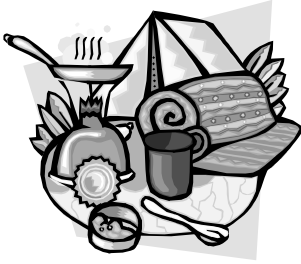
PLANNING YOUR KIDS' SUMMER

It's a fact of life for most busy families these days. When school ends and the "lazy?" days of summer begin, parents have more scheduling and juggling to do with the kids at home all day. We make summer child care arrangements for our school age children. Vacation plans are made. Transportation must be arranged for camp, lessons, and ball games... all of this can be multiplied exponentially for foster and adoptive parents who are juggling shifting timeframes, children with special needs and other details that come with being a foster/adoptive family. (article from about.com)



Try this strategy for scheduling your summer now. It will reduce your stress, teach your child organizational skills, and help your family look forward to a great summer.

The first step is to gather information . . .



Gather brochures and information on community and childcare resources in your town, ballgame schedules, children's summer class schedules, vacation books and brochures, anything that will give you the ideas and information you need to plan your summer schedule.

The first planning meeting should be between you and your spouse only . . .

Each of you should bring your personal calendars and use an initial planning calendar to sketch out your ideas. Mark off already scheduled vacation times and other firm plans that you have made.

What activities do you agree on for your child? Consider your budget, your child's interests, your work schedule, and your assessment of each individual child's needs. Keep it flexible to give your child some choices. Let her pick one of several enrichment classes at a local university or museum. Consider both active and quiet activities - swimming and art lessons, or baseball and computer classes. Does your child need extra help or enrichment in any of his school subjects? Perhaps you could buy an educational software program or hire a tutor to come in and help him through the summer. University classes and summer school are also options for extra summer learning.

What family activities would you like to plan? Have you wanted to plan a hiking trip or a museum visit but never seem to get around to it? Put it on the planning calendar now and you'll be much more likely to do it this year!

Next, meet with the entire family . . .

Bring your Summer Family Calendar plus individual calendars for each family member. You and your spouse have agreed on what activities are mandatory and what choices you will give your child. Start with the firm plans, including the child care arrangements. Most school-age children are not too thrilled with going to a day care center. But, if they must go, try to emphasize the field trips and other appealing summer activities offered by the center. It really helps if you can find out where their friends are going and make the same arrangements! Let them fill in special day care events on their individual calendars. Perhaps you can schedule special days each week that Mom will pick them up early or Dad will come and take them out to lunch. Again, put these on the calendar to give them special days to look forward to. Fill in any other already scheduled activities on the family and individual calendars - baseball games, family vacation, etc.



Now, bring out your brochures and begin to plan some fun. Let everyone look through the materials and brainstorm some activities that you and your children will enjoy. Find a balance of individual and family interests and plan accordingly. When you all agree on an idea, put it on the calendar. Now, you have a great summer planned.

If the bottom line says it's just not in the family budget to take a vacation or send kids to camp this year, don't let it get you down. This is the perfect opportunity to teach your kids a lesson in life, you know, the one about making lemonade out of lemons. Take your vacation at home this summer. With a little creative thinking it can be a lot of fun, at half the cost!

Use some of the money you'll save staying home to schedule a maid service to come on the Friday before your vacation, or get the family together for a (free) full-house cleaning. Then, you can have a true, chores-free vacation, and still have a moderately clean house when you "get back". Now, get out your vacation clothes and attitude and just relax.

No beach in your budget? Take the family to the pool every day during your "vacation". If your family enjoys road trips, spend one day on an activity that is 30 or 40 minutes away from your house, and be sure to stop at the Convenience Store to get everyone a "travel treat". **Visit your own city as if you are a tourist.** Go to the museums, theme parks, all those places that tourists visit when they come to your town (see page one for free options). Eat out every day for a few days, even if it's just a quick (cheap!) breakfast. **Teach your children the hobby of photography.** They will have fun taking pictures of your "vacation". To learn more about the subject, check out some websites. Most importantly, RELAX and have fun.

Summer Attachment Parenting Ideas

Attachment parenting, a phrase coined by pediatrician William Sears, is a parenting philosophy based on the principles of the attachment theory in developmental psychology. According to attachment theory, a strong emotional bond with parents during childhood, also known as a secure attachment, is a precursor of secure, empathic relationships in adulthood. Dr. Sears described attachment parenting in relation to eight principles that biological parents can focus on with their infants to encourage normal development and secure bonding.

In terms of the work we do as we parent children who have suffered abuse and neglect, attachment parenting is clearly different. Traditional attachment theory holds that caregiver qualities such as environmental stability, parental sensitivity, and responsiveness to children's physical and emotional needs, consistency, and a safe and predictable environment support the development of healthy attachment. Attachment parenting with foster and adoptive children involves providing a stable and consistent environment and taking a calm, sensitive, patient, predictable, and nurturing approach toward children. This environment, with this type of caretaking, fosters the development of attachment. The more time children spend with their foster or adoptive family, the faster they bond.

Because time together is part of the prescription for attachment parenting to work, the summer is a wonderful time to engage in attachment parenting activities that can be enjoyed by both parents and kids. Let's face it, with kids who struggle to attach, much of our time together isn't pleasant for either of us. The following ideas are both fun and encourage communication, sharing, turn taking and relationship building. Replacing even a small portion of our struggle time with fun time will work wonders for the morale of our kids and our families.

Some ways our kids can play with us to learn to be respectful, responsible and fun to be around are:

- Playing family fun games: Jenga, Down and Out, Bingo, Sorry, Labyrinth, Scrabble, Quiddler, Codo, Uno, Apples to Apples, etc... You can also teach your children special family specific rules to the card games it is a tradition to play in your family (this turns into a family claiming activity).
- Inside activities like baking, cooking dinner, scrapbooking, painting, singing, manicuring, pedicuring, styling hair, etc...
- Outside activities like making mud pies, building sand castles, walking, bird watching, feeding the ducks, sidewalk chalk art, hopscotch, jacks, hoola hoop, jump rope, bike riding, swimming, pool games like Marco Polo or team games like pool volleyball, picnic lunches, flying kites or playing hide and seek.

These activities in which parents play with kids promote natural bonding and attachment the same way that playing peek-a-boo and patty-cake does with babies. Our kids want and need to play and laugh with us. Summertime is a great time for attachment parenting fun.

MFGAA Advocacy and Crisis Management Director, Tammy Spears, offers answers to her most frequently asked questions.

How do I get another therapist for my child?

- You consult with the A/C worker and make them aware of your concerns and let them know you want to change and who you want your new therapist to be. If it is not court ordered, this is how you can get that change made.

How do I get my child classified as Behavior or Career?

- You have to gather information to present to the treatment team so it can be passed on to the RCST coordinator for her assessment. You will need to fill out a CS-9 form and have all the supporting information it requires. Therapist reports, school reports, and your charting of the child's behaviors will be needed to have a favorable decision made.

What do I do if my child is out of control on the weekend?

- Try to contact the worker and supervisor on the 418 at the home numbers. If that does not work, call the night worker at 816-440-0786. Leave your information and someone will contact you. If that fails, contact police or try to take the child to the hospital yourself.

Do I have to have siblings visit in my home on the weekend?

- Sibling visits are important for children in foster care, however, they need to be held where everyone is comfortable. You do not have to allow those visits to be in your home. Suggest other locations that are workable for the visits and assist in anyway you see fit.

How can I get my child into residential treatment?

- This process is very similar to the process for classification. You need all the supporting documentation to have the RCST team assess the child for appropriate placement.

Midwest Foster Care & Adoption Association's 6th Annual Conference

Integrate! Innovate! Collaborate! **Services for Children and their Many Families** **October 14 & 15, 2008**

Sponsored by the UMKC College of Arts & Sciences and School of Social Work

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association and the UMKC School of Social Work invite proposals to present your perspectives and experience at MFCAA's 6th Annual Conference that will be held at UMKC. This two-day conference brings together parents and those working with them to learn from each other, to improve their collaboration, and to integrate their efforts.

We firmly believe there are many innovative but not well-known approaches to working with these children and their families in our community. We want to shine a light upon them.

Call for Proposals

Please share your ideas and approaches to working with children in foster care or adoptions and with their many families. Topics addressed in previous conferences have included: parenting challenges and skills, social and behavioral interventions, and family and school communications.

For this year's conference, we also seek presentations about:

- **Innovative approaches that bridge perspectives of public child welfare staff and contractors, foster, adoptive, kinship and biological parents**
- **Ways to address the challenges of adopting teen-aged youth**
- **Models for collaborative team development**
- **Strengths-based means to connect biological families with foster or adoptive families to best support their child**
- **Bridging perspectives of legal representatives with those of the children and their families**
- **How current laws impact the lives of these children and their many families**

Presentation Formats

Skills Workshop

Workshops are from 45 to 90 minutes long and present specific skills useful for practitioners, educators, or parents. They should include exercises to demonstrate and develop these skills. Proposals for a workshop should include a detailed discussion of why this skill is important, how the skill will be taught during the session, and how the workshop enables participants to continue to test and develop these skills beyond the conference.

Paper Presentation

Paper proposals should detail the focus of the paper and how it contributes to understanding issues or concerns related to the conference theme and goals. Two or more related papers will be grouped in each paper session with 20 minutes allotted for presentation and 10 for audience discussion.

Roundtable or Panel Discussion

Roundtable or panel discussions typically include several related paper presentations, followed by extensive dialogue facilitated by a discussant to broaden or deepen our understanding of the issues or ideas presented. These proposals should detail the focus of each individual paper and how it speaks to goals of the conference and contributes to understanding and addressing the complex challenges faced by these children and their many families.

Poster

Poster presentations visually depict a paper or service. Poster boards (3' by 6') and push pins will be available. Tailor your presentation of a topic or service with graphics and visual aids on a poster board in our exhibit hall! Gain feedback on your work in more detail than some of the other formats allow! Connect with others for future collaboration!

Submission Process

All proposal submissions should include the following:

- **Presenter Information**—Name, title, organization, address, phones, fax, e-mail, and a brief biography
- **Format**—Paper, Roundtable, Skills Workshop, or Poster
- **Title**—No more than 14 words
- **Abstract**—50 words that summarize the focus of your presentation—This will be in the conference agenda and will be used by conference participants to select which presentation to attend
- **Summary**—up to 750 words—If your proposal is accepted, this will be published as part of the refereed conference proceedings—Your summary should clearly address conference themes and goals

Strong proposals will clearly identify key issues or concerns, and suggest innovative and collaborative approaches to integrate community response to foster or adoptive children and their many families—In addition, skills workshop proposals should clearly identify learning objectives

Please submit proposals to:

MFCAA/Attn: Justin Newkirk or Justin@mfcaa.org
3210 S Lee's Summit Rd
Independence, MO 64055

Submission dates:

All proposals must be submitted by June 30, 2008. Submissions will be reviewed in July, and selected presenters will receive an acceptance notice by August 15th.

Conference Format

Presenters will receive reduced conference fees that include two days of presentations and one evening for the poster session and MFCAA's dinner auction as well as a voucher for lunch each day in the UMKC food pavilion which offers a diverse selection of cuisine. Coffee/beverages and snacks will be available during breaks between conference sessions. CEU's will be available for professionals and a limited number of reduced tuition scholarships will be available for parents.

Tuesday, October 14

8:30am—10:15am: Welcome and Introductions
Plenary Address

10:15am—10:30am: Break

10:30am—Noon: Papers, Skills Workshops,
Roundtable Discussions

Noon—1:30pm: Lunch (provided)

1:30pm—3:15pm: Papers, Skill Workshops,
Roundtable Discussions

3:15pm—3:30pm: Break

3:30pm—6:30pm: Poster Session, Wine and
Snack Bar, MFCAA Silent Auction

6:30pm—8:30pm: Dinner & Presentation of
MFCAA Awards

Wednesday, October 15

8:30am—10:15am: Panel Discussion

10:15am—10:30am: Break

10:30am—Noon: Papers, Skill Workshops,
Roundtable Discussions

Noon—1:30pm Lunch (provided)

1:30pm—3:15pm: Papers, Skill Workshops,
Roundtable Discussions

3:15pm—3:30pm: Break

3:30pm—5pm: Papers, Skill Workshops,
Roundtable Discussions

Integrate!
Innovate!
Collaborate!

For more information, check out our website:

www.MFCAA

More information and **conference
registration to follow...**