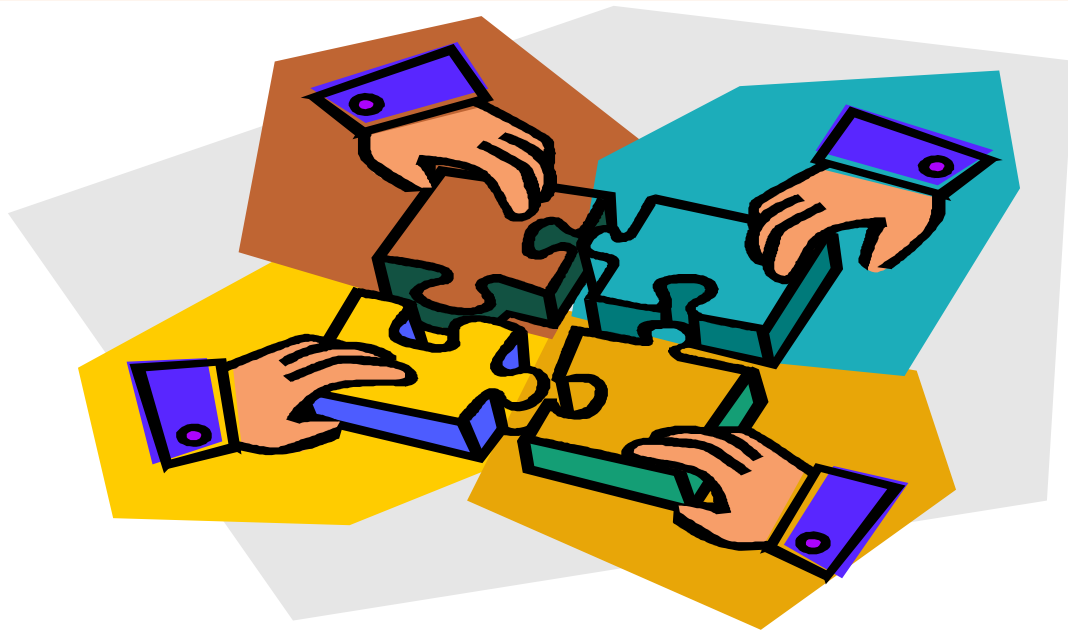


# MFCAA

**Adoptive Resource Center**

3210 S Lee's Summit Rd.  
Independence, MO 64055  
Phone: 816-350-0215  
Website: [www.MFCAA.org](http://www.MFCAA.org)

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## Putting the Pieces Together...

Supporting Missouri's Adoptive Families



# Adoption Resource Center-Western Missouri

## From the Adoption Resource Center Team...

Friends of MFCAA,

As we are beginning this new season, it is our goal to further develop our programs and resources so that the families and children we work with can be served in an incredible way. Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association has been undergoing some changes in the past few months so that our services can be expanded to a broader range of individuals and families. It is through our goal to serve foster, adoptive and kinship families that we hope to positively impact lives in an amazing way.

Through our time working with the very special families that are willing to take in, care for, and love those children who may not have been theirs from birth, we have encountered an amazing display of kindness, compassion, and service to others. Although we may not know your personal experience in the care of a child, we can recognize that while incredibly rewarding, this may often be a very difficult journey. It is in this understanding that we hope to provide you with the tools that can guide you, your children, and your family through the systems that will ideally lead to a permanent, forever-family home for those children you've welcomed into your life. These young individuals who may have struggled through many of their crucial early years of life can have a spark of hope because of YOU!

Within this Special Edition MFCAA Newsletter you will find information on our services that are specifically designed with you in mind. The programs noted have recently launched as a part of our new ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER project funded by a grant from the Missouri Children's Division and the Local Investment Commission. With this new endeavor, we are providing services that are directly related to the care of children who are anticipating adoption, nearing adoption, and who have been adopted. Please take the time to look over these resources and consider taking full advantage of those that will benefit you, your children, and your family. Included in our program is our respite program, support groups, crisis intervention, guidance, and advocacy. Please keep in mind that all services offered by MFCAA are completely FREE and of no cost to you. We look forward to working with you over the course of this new year, and look forward to hearing from you.

Suzen Ruiz

Justin Newkirk

Tammy Spears

Lori Ross

Teresa Williams

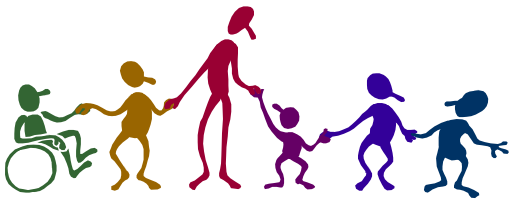
Respite Care

Support Groups/  
Training

Advocacy/  
Crisis Intervention

Advocacy/  
Crisis Intervention

Advocacy/  
Crisis Intervention



# Group Therapy and Support Groups



Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association is currently offering group services for children, as well as adults, who are a part of foster and adoptive care. We realize that there are many life changing circumstances and events happening while one is a part of these care systems, and we hope to be able to provide an arena for individuals to connect and identify with those who are in similar life situations.

## How Groups Work!

- Decreases isolation
- Improves social skills
- Monitors and intervenes in problematic interactions
- Kids identify with and learn from peers and group leaders
- Kids learn new and more effective ways of interacting and communicating about life circumstances

To provide these group services, MFCOA is teaming up with Lifeworks Family Treatment Group of Kansas City, a leading service provider of therapy that is geared towards strengthening the family unit as a whole. While we feel that individual therapy may be important for someone who is a part of foster or adoptive care, we believe that the support groups being offered by MFCOA can be very beneficial in conjunction with other treatment services.

# Adoption Support Groups

## Newly Adopted Group

### Group for Boys and Girls ages 9 and older

This group will focus on family claiming, shared experiences, and common challenges of joining your family later in life.

## Waiting for a Family Group

### Group for Boys and Girls ages 9 and older

This group will include peer mentors who have been adopted and who can empathize with and encourage group members. A focus will be on preparing youth for the possibility of a forever family.

## Understanding Adoption Group

### Group for Boys and Girls age 6—12

This group will focus on understanding adoption and developing strategies to manage the experience of adoption in daily circumstances.

## My Family is Adopting Group

### Group for Boys and Girls who are birth children in foster/adoptive homes

This group will focus on anticipating and developing strategies for dealing with the challenges that accompany the adoption of a sibling into the family.

## Sexual Abuse Reactive Group Therapy

When a child has been the victim of sexual abuse, one of the ways that they may opt to cope is through the demonstration of 'Abuse Reactive' behaviors. These behaviors include a variety of acting out options including subjecting other children to inappropriate touch or abuse. While this type of acting out is often seen as a 'perpetrating' type behavior, these kids are simply reacting to the abuse that they have suffered.

### Abuse Reactive Group—Level I

#### Group for Girls age 9—14

#### Group for Boys age 9—14

These groups will consist of age appropriate sex education, processing past abuse, taking responsibility for offensive behaviors, identifying triggers and learning new coping skills, including how to ask parents or caregivers for help.

### Abuse Reactive Group—Level II

#### Group for Girls age 9—14

This group will include information built upon Level I group and admission to this group requires successful completion of Level I group. This group will consist of identifying sexual abuse/offense cycle, confronting grooming behaviors, and relapse prevention plans.



**New Foster Parents Group**  
Group for all new Foster Parents

**New Adoptive Parents Group**  
Group for all new Adoptive Parents

For all adoptive parents—including: Open, Semi-open, Closed, Foster Care Adoption, Domestic, Intra-Family, International, or any other form of adoption.

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# ***Crisis Intervention***

- Tammy Spears  
- Lori Ross  
- Teresa Williams

Crisis intervention services, provided by three MFCAA staff members in response to individual family requests for assistance, allow adoptive families to receive the one-on-one advocacy assistance and support needed to maintain placement of extremely needy children in their homes and to access much needed counseling and emergency services. Families initiate these services via a phone call or email to MFCAA, indicating that some circumstance involving their family or the children in their home has become unmanageable without outside assistance. MFCAA provides assistance over the phone or internet, through visits to the home, attendance at meetings, and more. The demand for these services is quite high. Children adopted from foster care have unique needs. Their parents should have support from people who understand and have been there too. MFCAA's goal in relation to crisis responsiveness is to expand staff and services to reach out to rural populations on the Western side of the state.

**We are here to help - call us - 816-350-0215**

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# **Mental Health and Educational Guidance**

Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association continually strives to provide families with the educational resources needed to care for children from a variety of backgrounds. Our services include individual one-on-one training, educational support groups, as well as our annual conference and monthly training sessions. More information on these services can be found on our website: [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org) - or give us a call—816-350-0215.

## **Upcoming trainings include:**

**First Friday Training Meetings** - Begins at 6:30pm - Child care provided

**\*\*April 4, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Bullying

**\*\*June 6, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Engaging Families

**\*\*July 11, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Communication with Teenagers

**\*\*August 1, 2008\*\*** - Topic: How we Label

**\*\*September 5, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Dealing with Grief, Loss, and Separation

**Third Friday Career/Behavioral Trainings** - Begins at 6:30pm - Please RSVP - Dinner Provided

**\*\*March 21, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Social Skill Development

**\*\*April 18, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Transitions for Parents and Children

**\*\*June 20, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Structuring Safety with Sexual Predators and Victims

**\*\*July 18, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Taking Placements that Work

**\*\*August 15, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Keeping Life Books

**\*\*September 19, 2008\*\*** - Topic: Setting Boundaries

**Trainings are located at the MFCAA Dining Hall. For directions or more information, please contact us at: [www.mfcaa.org](http://www.mfcaa.org) or 816-350-0215**

# MFCAA Respite Care

Have you ever wished you could impact the lives of abused or neglected children, but you aren't quite ready to make the major commitment of becoming a foster parent and taking a child into your home on a long-term or permanent basis? Or are you already an adoptive or foster parent with more room for kids in your home and heart? Respite care may be for you! Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association is looking for caring people to provide respite care for adopted children.

## **What is respite care?**

Respite care is care provided to a foster or adopted child for a short period of time by someone other than the primary caregivers (i.e. foster parents, adoptive parents, or kinship parents). Respite care gives foster and adoptive parents and children the chance to have short, regular periods of time apart in which they can rest and recharge. It also provides crisis care for the times in which the trauma of the child is seriously impacting other members of the family. It enhances the quality of care for the child, gives parents a deserved and necessary break, and ensures healthy and stable placements for all children by preventing parental exhaustion and burn-out. While respite care is designed primarily to provide rest and relief for the primary caregivers, the child in respite care also benefits. A temporary change of caregiver gives the child an opportunity to build new relationship and experience a bit of independence. Quality respite care can nurture the child's sense of trust and stability through contact with additional stable and caring adults and their families. Respite care providers are an extremely important and valuable part of the foster care and adoption systems.

## **Who can qualify as a respite provider?**

Respite providers are qualified, trained individuals who care for children on a temporary basis either in their own homes or in the homes of the families using respite care. It is very important that only qualified, well-trained respite caregivers whom families can trust with their children provide respite care. The certification process required for respite caregivers helps assure this goal. To qualify as a respite care provider, an individual must be at least 21 years old. The other requirements vary depending on whether the provider is an adoptive parent, a current foster parent, or has no previous association with the foster/adoptive systems. A respite provider doesn't have to be married, be a parent, own his/her home, or have a large income. In other words, don't assume there is something about your circumstances that will prevent you from becoming a respite provider. If you have questions about your eligibility, please ask us.

## **How long does respite care last?**

Foster and adoptive families are allotted a certain number of respite care units per child per year. The number of units depends on the child's classification. They can divide those units up as they choose. The periods of respite care can last a day, a weekend, or a week. Respite care providers are free to choose the length of the periods of respite care they provide.

## **Where is the care provided?**

Care may be provided either at the respite care provider's home (out-of-home care) or at the foster/adoptive family's home (in-home care). Respite care providers choose the type of care they would like to provide.

## **How is respite care scheduled?**

When foster/adoptive parents are in need of respite care, they call MFCAA and give us information about the kids in need of care, when care is needed, etc. We then match their request with appropriate respite providers on our referral list. Next we call the potential respite providers with information about the care needed, and if the respite provider is interested, he/she calls the foster/adoptive parents directly to arrange care.

## **Do respite providers get to choose which children they provide care for and how often they provide care?**

Absolutely. When someone applies to become a respite provider, he/she provides information about the type of children for whom he/she would like to provide care. The provider may change this information at any time. When we call a provider with a placement, we give the provider detailed information about the child in need of care, and the provider is free to decline a placement at any time.

## **What benefits are given respite care providers and what support is available?**

The State of Missouri, through the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services, reimburses respite providers at a rate of \$20 per day for foster children classified as traditional or behavioral, and \$40 per day for children classified as career. All children in foster care are automatically eligible for paid respite care. However, in order for a provider to be paid to provide respite care to an *adopted* child, the child must have a respite care subsidy written into his/her adoption contract. For foster children, the foster parent gives the respite provider a respite payment form. After the respite care is completed, the respite provider submits the payment form

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# MFCAA Respite Care cont.

to Children's Division, and Children's Division sends a check directly to the respite provider. For adopted children, the rate (usually \$20 per day) is written into the adoption contract. The adoptive parent pays the respite provider directly. The adoptive parent then submits a form to Children's Division for reimbursement. Please note that MFCAA's respite program is a referral program only. Children's Division is wholly responsible for payment to respite providers, and all questions regarding payment should first be addressed to Children's Division.

## How long does it take to become a respite provider?

The length of the process varies and depends in part on how quickly you complete the paperwork and how quickly the agencies involved act. We estimate that the average length of the entire process, from start to finish, is approximately 90 days for new respite providers, and less for currently licensed foster parents and respite providers.

## Why should adopted children receive respite care?

While the need for respite care for foster children is clear, some people may wonder why adopted children need respite care. After all, they are in a stable, committed family. However, it is important to remember that these kids have been adopted from the foster care system. The numerous challenges they have, and the frustrations experienced by the parents, do not disappear when a family makes a lifetime commitment to them. The State of Missouri recognizes this, and includes a respite care subsidy in many adoption contracts.

## What is the process for becoming a respite provider?

If you decide you would like to become a respite care provider, we will provide you with a user-friendly packet of information that outlines the process step-by-step. We have attempted to streamline the process and make it as hassle-free as possible for those going through it. In addition, staff at MFCAA is available to answer your questions and help you through the process at every step.

## If I can't take a child into my home, can I still help?

Yes! For a variety of reasons, many potential providers aren't able to care for a child in their home. However, there are other options. Some foster and adoptive families prefer in-home care (in the child's home). Also, some churches have programs that provide a monthly "family night out" program where church members take care of foster and adopted children at the church for an evening. Sometimes that short period of time is all that is needed to help refresh and renew parents and kids. If your church would be interested in starting a program like this, let us know and we can help you get started.

## I would like more information about becoming a respite provider. Who should I contact?

We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. Please call Suzen at Midwest Foster Care and Adoption Association at (816) 350-0215, or e-mail [suzen@mfcaa.org](mailto:suzen@mfcaa.org).

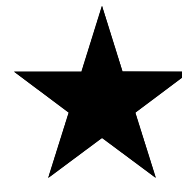
## I am a foster or adoptive parent in need of respite care. What do I do?

If you are a foster parent, call MFCAA and we will make every attempt to find a respite provider for you. If you are an adoptive parent, it is important to make sure the child for whom you are seeking care has a respite care subsidy in his/her adoption contract. If this is not the case, please call us and we will help you apply to amend the adoption contract to include a respite subsidy.

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# www.MFCAA.org



**For the latest information on...**

- Training
- Support Groups
- Foster/Adoptive Family Fun Events
- New resources
- Legislative updates
- Child Welfare Updates
- Parenting resources
- 'Lawyers For Kids' Wish Fulfillment Program
- MFCAA Membership
- Respite Care info
- Clothes Closet/Food Pantry news
- Foster/Adoptive Parent Conference
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community resources

**...and MUCH MORE!**