

FAMILY MATTERS

Published for foster and adoptive parents by the Adoption & Foster Care units of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services

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From the
Desk of Moira Weir,
HCJFS Director

When “Saving a Life” Takes on its Literal Meaning

Here is a story about a foster parent that stopped me in my tracks, scaring and thrilling me at the same time.

Last month, foster mom Kim Siegal and her husband, Bill, were switching care of their infant foster daughter when the baby, born premature and on oxygen, stopped breathing. Her monitor began beeping.

Siegal's training as a state-tested nursing assistant kicked in, and she began compressions and breaths while her husband called 9-1-1. The baby began breathing again, and paramedics arrived and stabilized the little girl before taking her to the hospital.

Kim Siegal had just saved her foster daughter's life.

Kim's heroic actions point to one indisputable fact: foster parents do so much more than just house, feed and clothe our children. They can and do save lives, both literally and figuratively. That may involve heroic actions like Kim Siegal's, or it may simply be in their caring touch. No matter what loving action a foster parent takes, it can truly make a difference in a child's life.

Showing love helps children to grow and learn that someone really does care about what happens to them. Those loving actions, those teaching moments, those close relationships - they will all make a difference long after that child leaves the home and continues down life's path.

Foster parents grow, too. They learn a lot about themselves. Kim's emotional experience shows how being a parent can bring out the best in someone.

Many thanks to Kim and to all foster parents. You are truly life savers in so many ways.

Warmly,

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Update on Adoption Reform Bill

HB 7, the adoption reform bill sponsored by Rep. Tom Brinkman, passed the Ohio House of Representatives by a vote of 93-1. The legislation will:

- Align foster care and adoption home studies
- Require adoption education in schools & through PCSAs
- Reinforce that courts must grant permanent custody to a PCSA after two years
- Narrow the circumstances a child can be placed in a PLA
- Mandate the creation of a child-centered recruitment task force

HB 7 will now head to the Ohio Senate where it is expected to pass easily. Legislators are moving quickly to wrap up work before they break for summer recess later this month. Much of the focus these final weeks will be on the combined budget correction and capital appropriations bill introduced yesterday.

Also, you may have heard, last week Governor Strickland signed into law SB 163, the foster parent reform legislation which strengthens background checks and safety measures. It will go into effect in mid-August.

We Prize Your Thoughts

You have a world of experience in living. We invite you to suggest ideas for articles in Family Matters. If we use your idea, you will win a photo album.

To submit ideas, please send an e-mail to Linda Tate at tatel@jfs.hamilton-co.org, or mail it to 222 E. Central Parkway, Cincinnati, Oh 45219.

You may also drop ideas off at the desk in the lobby at the Neighborhood Center at 237 William Howard Taft.



"I Can't Lose This Child!"

Foster parent's CPR training saves infant's life



Kim Siegal's voice cracked a little remembering the incident. "It was one of those really awful moments when you think, 'I can't lose this child,'" Siegal said a few weeks later.

Instead, Siegal's quick thinking - and her training as a state-tested nursing assistant - saved her foster child's life. Now, Siegal advocates for all foster parents to get and update their lifesaving training, no matter how long they have had their license.

Siegal and her husband Bill only had their infant girl for about a week. The baby had been born eight weeks early, and her lungs had not fully developed. Doctors put her on oxygen and a monitor with an alarm that would beep if she stopped breathing.

"They said the monitor could go off if she squirmed or moved a lot, but it would stop once she stopped moving," Siegal said. "I knew I could handle that without a problem."

A week after bringing the baby home, the Siegals met to switch care. She was heading home from work, and her husband was on his way to his job.

Siegal opened the car door. The monitor alarm was beeping - and it was not stopping. It kept beeping. The baby was turning blue.

"She wasn't responding to anything - her name, my touch, nothing," Siegal recalled. Her STNA training took over - not to mention her memory of a hospital training video.

"I had just watched the hospital's video about infant CPR," Siegal said, "and I just remembered it. I just did the compressions and breaths while my husband called 9-1-1."

The baby girl started breathing again.

Paramedics arrived and took over, getting the

child stabilized and ready to transport to the hospital. That is when Siegal said her emotions finally overwhelmed her.

"I cried for awhile," she said. "You just don't know how something like this will hit you."

The infant girl stayed in the hospital for two days while doctors observed her. Siegal said they wanted to see if the child would stop breathing again, but she did not.

The Siegals went to the hospital often to check on the baby. They worried about having a conversation with their own children and one other foster child if something happened to the infant girl.

The baby has been home now for a few weeks, but Siegal still watches her closely. "I'm still a little edgy with her home now," Siegal said. "But I pray for her every night - and all foster kids, too."

Looking back, Siegal said the CPR training paid off. She believes all foster parents should not only get trained, but practice it often.

"You just don't know when it might be needed," she said. "I hope I never have to use it again, but I know I can do it if I need to. It's a great thing for every foster parent to know." ✚



By: Deja Gibson

I am a caring girl
who loves dolphins.

I wonder if I will ever see a dolphin.
I hear them whistle in the night.
I see them jumping in my dreams.
I want to swim with dolphins.

I am a caring girl
who loves dolphins.

I pretend to be a dolphin trainer.
I feel happy when I swim with them.
I touch their rubbery skin.

I worry that I will not get to train them.
I cry when a baby dolphin gets hurt
I am a caring girl
who loves dolphins.

I understand they want to swim free.
I say dolphins should always be free.
I try to keep them safe.

I hope to be a perfect trainer.
I am a caring girl
who loves dolphins.

Resource Phone Numbers & Web Sites

Southwest Ohio Family Care Association (SWOFCA):

www.ofcaonline.org/pages/resources-by-region/resources-for-region-10.php

Ohio Family Care Association (OFCA):

www.ofcaonline.org

Post-Adoption Services:

Call 241-KIDS (241-5437) and request a referral

Have a resource suggestion?

Email us at familymatters@jfs.hamilton-co.org

NFPA and University of Phoenix Partner to Provide First Chance Scholarship Program



Through a partnership with University of Phoenix and the National Foster Parent Association, NFPA will be provided 50 full tuition scholarships redeemable at University of Phoenix for youth in foster care affiliated with NFPA. Recipients may choose any campus they want to attend, including online.

The program will be administered under the First Chance Scholarship umbrella, with two application periods per year. Interested parties should go to www.nfpaonline.org/uploads/NFPA_First_Chance_Application.pdf to download an application.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Candidates for the scholarship must demonstrate the following to be considered:

1. Applicants who reside in the United States must meet one of the following requirements: be a legal resident of the United States; have been granted permanent residency; have a valid visa that does not prohibit educational studies; have been granted temporary protected status along with approved Notice of Action issued by Citizen Immigration Services and verified through CIS Form g-845; or have been granted asylum along with the approved Notice of Action issued by the Citizen Immigration Services.
2. Applicant may reside in a foster home, group home, or kinship care.
3. Are not receiving 100% tuition reimbursement from another source.
4. Student Status: Is not a current University of Phoenix student or in the process of enrolling
5. Are not employees or family members of employees of Apollo Group, Inc., University of Phoenix, Western International University, Institute for Professional Development or any other subsidiary of Apollo Group, Inc.
6. Submit a complete, signed application, together with all supporting documentation, if any, by the deadline date listed under the Selection Process section. The completion of the application form does not create an obligation to award a scholarship to applicant.
7. Submit an essay, "Furthering My Education." High importance will be placed on the applicant's desire to advance in their education, with an emphasis on furthering their careers, and their impact in the community for which they reside. To be considered, the essay must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Two-four page essay in standard APA format
 - b. Double spaced
 - c. 12 point font
 - d. 8 x 11 white paper
 - e. Pages must be paper-clipped together (no staples).
8. Two letters of recommendation.

DEADLINE DATE:

Complete application and supporting documentation, if any, must be received on or before July 7, 2008. Applications received after the designated deadline date will not be considered. No exceptions.

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Events!



Adoption/Foster Care Orientations

August 13, 20, 27

September 3, 10

October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

November 5

December 3, 17

If you know of friends and family interested in Adoption or Foster Care, the 2008 Orientation Dates are listed above.

Interested parties should call (513) 632-6366 and leave a name and phone number, as well as the date they wish to attend.

Sweet Raspberry Lime Iced Tea

Recipe courtesy "How to Boil Water"



5 bags raspberry zinger tea

6 cups water

Sugar Syrup:

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

1/2 pint raspberries

1 lime, cut into wedges

Mint sprigs

Put the tea bags in an 8-cup measuring cup or heat safe bowl. Boil the water, pour it over the tea bags, and allow to steep for at least 10 minutes. Allow to cool and remove tea bags.

In a small saucepan combine the sugar and 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Cook briefly until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and add raspberries. Let come to room temperature.

Combine the tea and raspberry sugar syrup, to taste. Put ice into four 12-ounce glasses. To each squeeze in a wedge of lime, pour sugared tea over, and garnish with a sprig of mint.

Yield: 4 servings

RENEGOTIATION OF ADOPTION SUBSIDY

After an adoption is finalized, some families find they need additional financial support in order to meet the needs and services for their children, or a change in a family circumstances occurred that has affected the overall household that a family had not anticipated. HCJFS can help by renegotiating your adoption subsidy.

What is renegotiation?

Renegotiation of adoption subsidy is a process in which your child's adoption subsidy is reviewed and considered for either an increase, decrease, or no change in the monthly allotment that you receive to assist with the care of your child.

How can I request a renegotiation of my child's adoption subsidy?

You can request a review of your son or daughter's adoption subsidy by either calling your Revenue Enhancement worker or by contacting 241-KIDS and requesting to renegotiate your child's subsidy. Your request will outline your need and be generated through 241-KIDS.

When should I consider renegotiation?

You should consider renegotiation when your child's needs have significantly changed (i.e. an increase in need or a change in therapeutic services; your household income has been negatively effected, etc.). If you are not certain, please continue to make your request and you will be contacted by the post adoptions caseworker to review your request with you.

How long does the process take?

The process should take no longer than 45 days. The process will vary based on each child's needs and the adoptive parents ensuring the adoption unit is provided with the most current assessments and/or information to accurately capture your child's therapeutic needs.

You should have all documents available to expedite the process, as these are necessary in order to determine the child's current level of care. A Level of Care (LOC) is the therapeutic per diem assessed for your child if they were to enter the foster care system today. This would include Diagnostic Assessment Forms (DAF), Psychological, IEP, MFE, medical/mental health, and/or other professional documentation of your child's special needs. These supporting documents must be signed by a professional who is treating your child. If your family circumstances warrant the increase, documentation will still be necessary in order to determine the rate the agency may negotiate.

Who can I contact for further assistance once the process has begun or if I have any questions?

Post Adoption Worker assigned.

Steps in the Adoption Subsidy Process

- 1) 241-KIDS Referral request for renegotiation.
- 2) Request sent to Adoption Supervisor.
- 3) Case assigned to Post Adoptions case worker.
- 4) 3-day phone call to set up initial home visit to determine families need for subsidy or case management services.
- 5) Adoption Renegotiation packet with renegotiation tool will be mailed to family.
- 6) Home visit from post adoption case worker.
- 7) If additional assistance is needed to complete the tool communication needs to occur between family and post-adoption case worker to assure the 45 day deadline is met.
- 8) Adoption manager will review the renegotiation tool and supporting documents, and forward on for new LOC determination.
- 9) Once LOC is determined all documents will be forwarded to the renegotiation panel.
- 10) Renegotiation panel will review and schedule appointments via phone conference or in-office visit.
- 11) Subsidy amount is negotiated.
- 12) Family will sign a new Adoption Subsidy Agreement in order to finalize the process.

Hamilton County Medicaid Dental Providers

Amazing Smiles Family Dentistry
1140 Harrison Ave.; 367-9464

Children's Hospital Dental - Anderson
7495 State Rd.; 636-6133

Children's Hospital Dental - Fairfield/William
3050 Mack Rd.; 636-6133

Children Hospital Dental Harrison/Thomas
10450 New Haven Rd.; 636-6500

Children's Hospital Dental - Main Campus
3333 Burnet Ave.; 636-4641

Children's Hospital Dental - Mason
9560 Children's Dr.; 636-6842

Cincinnati Dental Care - Sohi & Gao, DDS
4544 Montgomery Rd.; 351-6600

Clermont Pediatric Dental, Christine Apel, DDS
2400 Clermont Ctr Dr., Ste 103; 732-7206

Crest Smile Shoppe Lewis & Nguyen, DDS
612 Rockdale Rd.; 352-4072

Dental One Avondale, Manfred Schall, DDS
3494 Reading Rd.; 559-2200

Dental One Over-the-Rhine, Manfred Schell, DDS
5 E. Liberty St.; 721-6060

Dr. Dana K. Bateman; 6526 Montgomery Rd.; 351-7252

Dr. Carolyn Bates-Cousin
8040 Reading Rd., Ste 53; 948-9339

Dr. Lewis C. Brokaw
10475 Montgomery Rd., Ste 21; 791-0300

Dr. Richard E. Bruner; 2039 Anderson Ferry Rd.; 451-4455

Dr. Daniel Claybon; 10545 Montgomery Rd.; 793-0880

Dr. Stephen L. Claybon
285 E. Main St; 732-0541

Dr. Hewitt J. Cooper
1305 William Howard Taft Rd.; 751-3384

Valley Family Dental, Dr. Herbert Feingold
7125 Reading Rd.; 631-2224

Dr. Kurt W. Ficker; 5001 Montgomery Rd.; 351-3779

Dr. Michael Gordon
3544 Springdale Rd.; 385-6555

Dr. Wanda Hood
2310 Baltimore Ave.; 541-5599
6409 Madison Rd.; 561-1611

Dr. William E. Kennedy; 4903 Vine St.; 242-7747

Dr. Jon P. Larson
497 Cincinnati-Batavia Pike; 528-1223

Roselawn Family Dental, Dr. Lan Law
7540 Reading Rd.; 821-3118

Dr. Gerald M. Lawson
2916 Gilbert Ave.; 751-1112

Helping Children Adjust to Losses

Author(s): Child Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov; Year Published: 2005
This is part 4 of 4 from "Helping Your Foster Child Transition to Your Adopted Child."

Adoption experts acknowledge the importance of helping children integrate their previous attachments to important people in their lives in order to be able to transition that emotional attachment to a new family (Donley, 1988; Fahlberg, 1991; Henry, 2005). Integration is a way of helping children cope with the painful realities of the separation from their birth families that often impact their future behaviors and can create extraordinary stress between them and their foster/adoptive parents. The five-step integration process, first described by adoption pioneer K. Donley (1988), is an effort to clarify the child's permission to be in foster care, to live with new parents, to be loved by them, and to love them back.

Steps in the Integration Process:

1) Create an accurate reconstruction of the child's entire placement history.

Creating a lifebook, lifemap, or ecomap with a child helps to see and understand his or her own history.

2) Identify the important attachment figures in the child's life.

Foster parents might be able to learn who these important people are in a child's life by listening to the child talk about people from previous placements. These attachment figures might be parents, but they could be siblings, former foster parents, or other family members.

3) Gain the cooperation of the most significant of the attachment figures available.

If possible, parents should cooperate with the birth mother during a child's visits or gain the cooperation of a birth grandparent or relative to whom the child was attached. Even if the birth family is not happy about a child's permanency goal of adoption, there is likely to be one important person (a teacher, a former neighbor) who will be willing to work with foster/adoptive parents or the agency to make a child's transition to adoption easier.

4) Clarify the permission message.

It is important for children to hear and feel from people who are important to them that it is all right to love another family. The important person in a child's life who is available to give the child that message should be sought out to do so.

5) Communicate it to the child.

Whether the "permission to love your family" comes in the form of a letter or phone call from grandma or from the birth parent during family visits, it is important that children hear from that person that it is not their fault they are in foster care and that it is all right to live another family. This "permission" will go a long way to helping a child relax and transfer his/her attachment to a new family (adapted from Donley, 1988).

In working with children during this transition phase it will be important for parents and others working with the child to use the following skills (Henry, 2005):

- 1) Engaging the child
- 2) Listening to the child
- 3) Telling the truth
- 4) Validating the child's life story
- 5) Creating a safe space for the child
- 6) Realizing that it is never too late to go back in time
- 7) Embracing pain as part of that process

Conclusion:

While on the surface it may seem easy for a child to stay in the family in which he or she was living as a foster child, in reality, the internal process for a child and family is much more complicated. Allowing children to just "drift" into adoption without acknowledging the very significant changes for the family may lead to later difficulties. Foster/adoptive parents need to help children consider and understand their own history and reasons why they cannot live with their birth family, help them adjust to this loss, and help them transfer their attachments to the foster/adoptive family. In helping children, families will need to consider each child's needs as they are related to the child's age, health, personality, temperament, and cultural and racial experiences.✚

Fahlberg describes more about these techniques and how to use them with children of various ages in her book, A Child's Journey Through Placement (1991).

Helping Children Transfer Attachments

Once it is clear that a child will be adopted by the foster family, there are many things parents can do to signal to a child that his or her status within the family has changed.

Some of these include:

- * Encouraging the child to start calling the adoptive parents "mom" and "dad"
- * Adding a middle name to incorporate a name of family significance
- * Hanging pictures of the child on the wall
- * Involving the child in family reunions and similar extended family activities
- * Including the child in family rituals
- * Holding religious or other ceremonies to incorporate the children into the family
 - * Making statements such as, "In our family, we do it this way" in a supportive way
- * Sending out announcements of the adoption (Fahlberg, 1991).

NEEDED!

Supportive, loving families for these young people (and others!)



Iesha

born Sept., 1996

Iesha loves to sing, especially church music, and is very good at it. She is intelligent and sweet, and has a smile that lights up the room. She wants to be a nurse, and has been working hard in science class.

This reserved and shy girl also likes to watch television, especially cartoons. She is very helpful around the house with her foster mom, and has been a good big sister to her younger foster sibling.

Iesha looks forward to being adopted by a calm family, and says she would like to live in the city or the country.



Lamont

born April, 1999

Lamont catches on to things quickly, particularly if they involve math. It's his favorite subject at school, and he really enjoys it. Another love of this energetic and eager young man is football - he plays on his school's team. Lamont can't get enough of the Bengals, Rams and Patriots.

Although physically active, Lamont also has quiet indoor interests. He enjoys playing checkers and Old Maid, and he also likes to read. Someday he would like to visit Disney World.

To learn more about these children or others available for adoption, call (513)632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org

What Is a Foster Father or Adoptive Father?

A Tribute to the Dads They Didn't Have to Be, *By Carrie Craft*

Watching my husband, who is a foster parent as well as an adoptive parent, interact with different children over the years has caused me to stop and wonder; what makes him a good father? What makes any man a good foster or adoptive parent?

Using respectful words and tone of voice, letting children know that not all men speak with rough voices or degrading language.

Taking time out to play. Sharing this time with children allows them to see that not all men are too busy watching TV or getting drunk to play. Whether wrestling, going to the playground, or out in the backyard, these foster and adoptive fathers take the time to interact with children doing activities that they enjoy.

Being a good husband or partner shows children that there are men that can demonstrate not only what a good father is, but what a good husband or partner is by planning date nights and taking time with their spouses.

Taking time for the little things like running errands together or hanging out in the garage changing oil, sends the message that they like having kids around.

They also take time for the big things like family vacations and camp outs. These dads are into making family memories too.

Demonstrating generosity and a loving nature by giving up the comfort of a relaxing weekend to take in a frightened foster child.

Teaching children not only how to work with their hands, but to understand a job well done. By doing this fathers are teaching the value of a strong work ethic.

Sharing with the children a forever father's love by giving the children their name and a permanent home to those children who can't return to birth family.

Two additions to our list, courtesy of a former foster dad and adoptive father, Nic.

Reading to the children in your home. If a dad will take time to read stories to kids, and do so in a way that makes the stories come alive, it opens a whole new world to those kids. When reading is easy and enjoyable, college educations become second nature, and a million new worlds are opened to you, worlds far richer and healthier and deeper than what you will find on television.

Sticking to your principles and promises even when it hurts. Again, when kids see that Dad always values integrity far more than expediency or comfort, they will embrace integrity as well. (Eventually!)

I think that what makes a good father is a bit of all of the above and much, much more. I just want to say that the communities that are served by foster and adoptive fathers are very lucky to have these men among them.

Thank you, for everything you do.✿

*More About Fathers:
Top 10 Ways to Balance Life and Work & Top 10 Ways to Spend
Quality Time with the Kids Printable Fathers Day Coupons*

*Suggested Reading:
What Is an Adoptive Mother?*

Family Matters