

NOVEMBER 'S

NEWSLETTER



WFAPA

Wisconsin Foster & Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.

2023



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

DCF expresses their gratitude for WFAPA's support of foster and adoptive families in Wisconsin.



In an email they stated that although they are so grateful for WFAPA, they will no longer sponsor our organization beginning next year.

ATTENTION

PLEASE



HALLOWEEN FUN

OTHER THAN THE SATURDAY NIGHT FIRE ALARM BLARING...



GO TO OUR WEBSITE, WFAPA.ORG TO VIEW MORE CONFERENCE PICTURES



GET READY FOR THE ULTIMATE ADOPTIVE & FOSTER PARENT CONFERENCE!

DATE April 12th-14th

Join us as Jen Shares Her Inspirational Journey of Overcoming Adversity

Through humor, personality and spunk, Jen openly discusses her journey, from the accident that changed her life to how she has adapted to her new reality. As a mother of three, even becoming paralyzed couldn't slow her down. Jen shares her "optimism through obstacle" approach, inspiring and motivating you to conquer your own challenges.

Come along for the ride, no doubt you will cry and laugh along the way with her humor, personality and spunk; and leave:

- Feeling confident to overcome
- Challenged to look at Ability versus Disability
- Reflect on your own personal Handicaps!

Don't miss out on this emotional & uplifting experience!

www.wfapa.org

REGISTER NOW



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Wisconsin Foster & Adoptive Parent Association, Inc.

Welcome TO THE TEAM!



CAITLYN HULS
Grant Writer Position

Introducing our new Grant Writer, Caitlyn! Let's all welcome Caitlyn – our newest addition to the team. Caitlyn comes to us with a wealth of experience as a pre-school teacher, foster parent, and writing grants. She helped create Diapers for Angels program in the Taylor County area, which offers a variety of sizes of diapers, ranging from newborn to adult, to individuals and families in need. Caitlyn's passion and commitment to helping others will be a great asset to our team.

HAPPY NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH!



Welcome TO THE TEAM!



JUDY OLMANSON
Legislation Chair

Introducing our new Legislation Chair, Judy! Meet Judy, a retired child welfare social worker who resides on a cozy farm located two miles south of Fairchild. Judy has dedicated over 37 years to her profession, and now she teaches public adoption classes for pre-adoptive families through UW Milwaukee. Judy's commitment to helping others is a valuable asset to our team. We are thrilled to have her onboard.

GET READY FOR THE ULTIMATE ADOPTIVE & FOSTER PARENT CONFERENCE



DATE
April 12-14, 2024

Meet Chauncey Strong, MSW, the Executive Director with a heart for child welfare and a career spanning over 30 years. He's spent countless hours working side-by-side with families and kiddos, building a unique perspective on the field and its challenges.

Chauncey's training and consulting is no snooze-fest either! He revs up audiences with motivation, inspiration, and a good challenge to get them moving and improving the lives of kids and families in the child welfare system.

Get ready to be wowed by Chauncey!
Don't miss out!

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Being in Foster Care During the Holidays



Being in foster care during the holiday season can be tough! There's no way to escape the reality of being separated from your biological family and your best efforts may be made to blend in with your foster family. Even with the best of intentions, the season can be difficult and may result in holiday blues. To understand what the holidays in foster care mean to youth in foster care, Synethia Davis, a former foster child shares her perspective: "Being in Foster Care During the Holidays" An essay by Synethia Davis.

As a small child, I loved [the holidays] because I was focused on presents and not on who I was with [or without]. That all changed once I became a teen. I hated it. When it started to get closer to the holidays, I knew I would have to fake being a part of someone else's family. Every year, there was a new family, and every year I would be the outcast. I hated when families treated me as one of their family members because there was no way they thought I would be a long-lasting family member. There was no way they could love me as much as they loved their biological family members. There was not a Christmas or Thanksgiving that I shared the same family gathering as the previous year, except for [my days in] elementary school. I hated meeting new people.

As I got older, in my teen years, most of my holidays were spent in facilities and group homes. I liked being at the facilities because I knew the staff and residents were going to be there after the holidays. I didn't really like spending the holidays at group homes because there were always other

people that I never saw during any other time of the year. They would have volunteers that liked "giving back." They would bring their kids and I was always envious, so I hated it.

I also hated having holiday respite. I know social workers may have thought it was a good idea, because many people believe a child should be with a family during the holidays. But that was just a slap in the face to me because I had no home. After the holiday is up, I continued to have no home. To this day, no matter whose home I'm at for the holidays, I never feel a part of the family. I always feel like an outcast. Even if I've been spending holidays with the family for a few years, I will find small things in someone's actions or words and take offense quietly. To this day, being in foster care during the holidays made me envious of biological families. I don't really celebrate holidays now, due to my own personal beliefs, but I want my children to experience what I didn't. I'm not sure if any other foster kid felt as I did, but I would never want a child to experience my pain. I've never expressed this to anyone, but I've accepted it now.

Davis, 30, is a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army National Guard. She spent most of her life, from about age 4 until she aged forward as a young adult, shuffling through foster care. So, how can youth advocates and foster parents help guide children in foster care through the holiday season successfully?

Here's a list of helpful tips to consider during this season and for any time your child needs a little extra patience and love.

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RALLY UP YOUR STATE'S LAWMAKERS!



WFAPA Friends,

My name is Alaric Huls. I am not a career politician or a professional lobbyist. I am just a regular guy doing my best to fight for better treatment of Wisconsin's children.

And I need your help.

My wife and I are public school teachers in Medford, WI. We decided to use our background in education to become licensed foster parents. Shortly after gaining our initial license, it became apparent that foster care in Wisconsin is filled with good people who often find themselves at odds with a system that has lost sight of protecting children. Since we became foster parents, we have heard countless stories of children being returned to environments that were unsafe, or stories of children being sent back to biological families that were not prepared to accept a caring and mentoring role in the child's life.

I have personally witnessed a change in permanency occur in order to accommodate the biological family or a distant relative at the expense of the protection, well-being, and future of a child. This sudden change and separation from the foster family they have grown to love and feel safe with, often does little more than retraumatize the child and destroy their trust in the foster care system.

I wanted something to change. Our state can, and should, do more for kids.

So I decided to do something about it.

Last spring I began writing letters and sending emails to my state representatives in regards to our state's foster care system. Specifically, I advocated for bills designed to more closely follow the "15 of 22 months" rule related to the termination of parental rights in an effort to eliminate the lack of permanency (and subsequent chaos, confusion, and heartache) that foster children experience. In addition, I called for legislation that explicitly states that if reunification with the biological parents is deemed inappropriate, priority for placement needs to be given to a child's current caregivers.

My letters and emails resulted in a face-to-face meeting with Karen Hurd of the Wisconsin State Assembly. In the meeting, I shared some statistics related to foster care in Wisconsin, such as:

- 14 months is the median length of stay for a Wisconsin child in foster care.
- 22% of children in Wisconsin re-enter foster care.
- Over 1,300 children in Wisconsin are waiting to be adopted from foster care each year.
 - Of those, only 42% have seen the courts terminate parental rights and make adoption a realistic possibility.

- The percentage of children in Wisconsin adopted after four years in care (or more) is over 27%.
- Roughly 50% of Wisconsin children in foster care graduate from high school.
- The percentage of foster homes that close annually in Wisconsin is 15%.
- There are over 25,000 active pending court cases related to child welfare and foster care in the state of Wisconsin.
 - 40% of court cases noted substance abuse as a contributing factor in the foster care placement of a child.

The meeting went very well and Karen Hurd gave me her word she would go to work trying to correct some of the issues I had brought to her attention. To her credit, she has done that. In fact, the state assembly is currently drafting legislation to address my concerns related to the "15 of 22 months" rule and priority of placement if biological parents are deemed inappropriate.

I never dreamed I'd get this far. I'm just a school teacher who lives in rural Wisconsin. And yet, because of my willingness to repeatedly email and contact my representatives, there is legitimate legislation being created at the state capitol.

While this is all very exciting, it's not enough. I am fearful the bills won't have enough support when they come out of committee. This is where I need your help.

I am asking anyone that reads this article to please contact your state legislators and tell them to support foster care legislation. If an average joe like me can do it, I assure you that you can too!

I frequently hear foster parents talk about the brokenness of the system and how reform is needed.

Now is the time. Legislation is being crafted. We owe it to our kids to make sure it doesn't fail.

If you aren't sure what to do or who to contact, please contact me and I will be happy to help you. My email is hulsal@medford.k12.wi.us

I welcome any opportunity to assist you with finding state representatives or helping to craft emails and letters.

The system is broken. But it doesn't have to be. We can fix it - together.

Alaric Huls
Social Studies Instructor
Football Coach
Medford Area Senior High



“ If an average joe like me can do it, I assure you that you can too! ”

ROB SCHEER

What's A Comfort Case



Huge shoutout to Rob Scheer for coming and sharing his story. The tale of his struggle is all too common: as a child, he was tossed into the foster care system and dragged around his meager belongings in a trash bag. Years later, Rob, along with his husband Reece, decided to grow their family by adopting from the foster care system. When their children arrived on their doorstep with their belongings in the same sorry sacks.

Rob and his family decided it was time to change this practice and the idea for Comfort Cases was born. With the vision of assembling backpacks filled with comfort and personal care items to deliver to local DCFS, the Scheer family invited their community to pack some cases. The first Packing Party was held in December of 2013 and shortly thereafter Comfort Cases was established as an official 501(c)3.

To date, more than 200,000 Comfort Cases® and Comfort XL duffel bags have been distributed to children in foster care in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and now in the United Kingdom, with Comfort Cases UK launched in 2022. Rob's ultimate goal is for every youth to receive a Comfort Case® upon entering foster care.



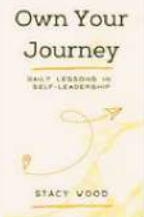
"I remember carrying a trash bag and feeling worthless, like nobody cared about me."

- Comfort Cases founder Rob Scheer

November is National Adoption Month

National Adoption Month is about spreading awareness. It is a month to encourage others to learn about adoption, to hold adoption related events, and to acknowledge the people in this country whose lives have been impacted by adoption. The mission of National Adoption Month is to celebrate the families who have grown through adoption, and to recognize the many children who are still waiting for forever families.

A Day Well Spent with Stacy: Empowering Insights and Motivation



Our time spent with Stacy was truly wonderful. Not only did people enjoy mingling with her, but her motivational talk was truly inspiring. She shared her story and insights from her book, "Own Your Journey - daily lessons in self-leadership."

Let's be real here... Parenting, let alone fostering, can definitely be a tough gig at times. According to the national average, nearly half of all homes licensed to provide foster care will quit within their first year of fostering. That means if ten families open their doors, four of those families will close them in less than 12 months.

Fostering is hard. There's no gentle way to put it. It impacts every facet of a fostering family's life, from leisure time to work schedules, traditions and routines to time with your partner. Ever realized how much a placement can gobble up your schedule, leaving little room for friends and you-time? It's a real challenge to find balance!

For some folks, it becomes quite overwhelming very quickly. They feel afraid, alone, and unable to continue. This isn't because they are bad people, weak people, or inadequate

parents. They are human and, too often, not receiving the support they need. They experience burnout.

Fostering unique kiddos with their own tales and struggles is no small feat. How ready are you to tackle it- all with some healthy coping tactics? Have you ever taken care of a foster child who had a difficult time adjusting and exhibited challenging behavior? How did you manage to build an emotional connection with them?

While reuniting the child with their family is the ultimate goal of foster care, the journey can be arduous, especially for those in long-term foster care. During your journey, do you have the necessary support or access to a network of foster parents who can provide guidance and answer any questions you may have during difficult periods?

During her speech, Stacy stressed the importance of self-awareness and self-care, motivating us all to strive towards being our best selves.

Missed the event? Head to her website, www.ttwoods.com/own-your-journey, to learn more or purchase her book.





Join Us As A Sponsor Today

Empowering Foster and Adoptive Families: Join Our Mission as a WFAPA Sponsor!

WFAPA is committed to supporting, advocating, and providing resources for foster and adoptive families across the country. We are proud of the progress we have made so far, but we know that our work is far from over. With the help of supporters like you, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of these families.

As we continue our journey, we invite you to consider becoming a sponsor of WFAPA. With a one-time yearly donation of \$300.00 or a monthly donation of \$25.00 for one year, you can help us achieve our goals. Plus, since we are a 501(3)(C), your donation is tax deductible.

By becoming a sponsor, your company can benefit from the positive publicity of supporting our mission and organization. We also help promote your business on various platforms such as:

- Our website, www.wfapa.org.
- Our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/wfapa.
- Social media.
- Our quarterly newsletters.
- Our Spring and Fall Conferences'

If your company is interested in joining our cause, please reach out to us. For more information, visit our website at www.wfapa.org, select 'Support Our Work', and then click on 'Sponsors'.

We are excited to partner with you!



THE FOSTER CARE QUILT

Honoring the Lives of Abused and Neglected Children

This meaningful project is dedicated to the memory of children who have suffered from abuse and neglect. The final square is intentionally left blank to remember those who have lost their lives and were not protected by the system.

The idea for this project originated from personal foster care experiences and heartbreak. It felt appropriate to share the stories of other children in the foster care system, so we reached out to every county in Wisconsin. We provided a quilt block and asked for a drawing from a foster care or adopted child, along with their story.

As the project progressed, it became clear that there needed to be a greater awareness of the number of children in the system, how they arrived there, and the experiences they had while in care.

The Power of Storytelling in Highlighting Foster Children's Struggles

Reading through the experiences of foster children can be heart-wrenching. Some accounts are filled with success, while others are marked by heartbreak. Regardless of the outcome, all the stories share a yearning for a loving home and someone to care for them. Unfortunately, these tales also highlight the turmoil, uncertainty, and obstacles that the children, birth families, and some foster/adoptive families face. This is why the Tumbling Block quilt block was chosen for this project – to represent the challenges that these children and families encounter.

Taking Responsibility for the Welfare of Children in Need

As a society, we have a moral obligation to prioritize the well-being of vulnerable children. The current statistics of success in the system seem to be at odds with the real-life stories of children in need. It's crucial that we take action and reach out to our State Senator, Representatives, the

Governor and local government officials to advocate for necessary reforms and guidelines to ensure that all children have the opportunity to thrive.

Over 500,000 children in the United States seek refuge every day from abuse while in foster care. Unfortunately, this means there are countless kids who are still waiting for a safe and affectionate family to welcome them home. Please think about opening your heart and home to those in need. For further details, get in touch with your county's adoption agencies, visit the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parents Association at www.wfapa.org or contact the state adoption resource center.

Take a moment to view the drawings and read their stories by visiting our website, www.wfapa.org.



Display the Quilt and its Stories

If you're keen on exhibiting the quilt and the stories that come with it, don't hesitate to contact Melinda Kasch.

The quilt will be shipped to you free of charge, with return postage included. Reach out to Melinda via email at mkasch@wi.rr.com, phone at (262) 895-2652, or mail at 8912 Sadler Drive, Wind Lake, WI 53185.

Continued from page 3 - Being in Foster Care During the Holidays

1. Do nothing. As odd as it sounds, sometimes the best thing to do when your youth in foster care is missing their biological family is nothing. Just support them in sorting out their own emotions and give them space to feel.
2. Listen. Your foster child may want to talk about good or difficult memories from past holiday seasons. Don't negate their renditions. Just be a listening ear.
3. Give them space. The holidays can be jam-packed with family activities that could be overwhelming for foster youth. Always remember to invite inclusion and not force it and accept when it's declined.
4. Include their traditions. Your way of doing the holidays is not the only way. Be open and willing to incorporate other traditions or activities.

When possible, include the biological family. Usually, children in foster care still have some biological relatives. Even if they're not close on the family tree,

that's still their family. You can offer to organize a small gift exchange, holiday phone or video chats, visitations, and written letter exchanges, etc.



Soon enough, the lights and decorations will come down and the guests will travel back home. Your foster youth will however remain away from their biological families and in your care. They may face a plethora of emotions before, during, and after the holidays that you may or may not understand. Just because they are safe in a foster home does not mean they are safeguarded from experiencing emotions surrounding them missing their biological families. Be patient and always be willing to show extra compassion and love.

Article taken from <https://seraajfh.com/being-in-foster-care-during-the-holidays/> By intisar | Dec 25, 2020 | Foster Care, Holidays, Written by Shay Stinson

IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN: WHEN FOSTER PARENTS MAY KEEP PLACEMENT

The legislature has given foster parents certain rights when seeking to continue to care for a child. Attorneys representing foster parents need to understand the issues their clients face when a foster child is removed to another foster placement or returned to a biological parent. The author discusses issues affecting foster parents in such situations, including notice, standing, procedure, and discovery.

Adam was born at home without a midwife or any medical personnel present. His mother, who had been addicted to cocaine for 15 years, had tested positive for cocaine earlier in the pregnancy. A few days after his birth, Adam's mother brought him to the hospital to obtain a birth certificate. Adam's mother was arrested on an outstanding warrant, and Adam was placed in protective custody.

After a brief stay with his grandmother, Adam was placed with the same foster parents with whom his two sisters had been placed and who had subsequently adopted the sisters after involuntary terminations of the biological parents' rights. The older sister, a teenager with severe medical problems, had lived with her biological mother but was removed when her needs were no longer being met. The younger sister was placed in protective custody when both mother and child tested positive for cocaine at birth. Over the next two and one-half years, Adam was cared for by his foster family, while his birth mother worked on meeting the conditions for return set by the state. Eventually, the state determined that Adam's mother had sufficiently met the conditions for Adam to be returned to her care.

Adam was one of the more than 7,800 children in foster care in Wisconsin in 2003,¹ the most recent year for which complete statistics are available. Nationally, foster children numbered more than one-half million in 2005,² the most recent statistics available. Of those children that exited the foster care system in 2005, the majority, more than 50 percent, returned to their birth families.³ However, since the

enactment of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, 4 adoptions by foster parents have risen dramatically, from 28,000 in 1996 to 50,000 in 2000.⁵ In part, the Act is intended to create permanency for children who might otherwise languish in foster care. What happens when a child is in foster care and a termination of the biological parents' rights either is unsuccessful or is not pursued? This article discusses some of the issues facing foster parents and their attorneys when a foster child is facing either removal to another foster placement or return to a biological parent. The article addresses notice, standing, procedure, and discovery issues.

Notice and Right to a Hearing

Foster parents who have had placement of a child for more than six months are entitled to an evidentiary hearing if they object to a change in placement of their foster child. Written notice stating the reasons for removal must be served on the foster parent at least 30 days before the removal is scheduled.⁶ The foster parent then has 10 days in which to file an objection and request a hearing either before an administrative body or the circuit court. The child may not be removed from the foster parent's care until after the hearing, or 30 days from the notice, whichever is later.⁷

When Adam's foster mother was served with a notice of change of placement, she filed an objection and requested a hearing before the circuit court. She also filed a discovery demand and a motion to maintain the status quo regarding the visitation schedule between Adam and his mother, so as to preclude an effective change in placement before the hearing. After several delays in scheduling the hearing, including one delay due to a more than year-long failure to perform drug testing, the CHIPS⁸ order expired, causing the court to lose jurisdiction over the matter. Neither the court nor the district attorney was willing to extend the order, and



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Continued from page 7 - In The Best Interest of Children...

the removal of Adam from his foster home was accomplished without the court ever having determined if removal was in Adam's best interest.

Constitutional Rights of Biological Parents

Since Stanley v. Illinois,⁹ courts have recognized that parents have a fundamental constitutional right to the care and custody of their children. However, this right is not absolute. Parental rights are dependent, to some extent, on the exercise of parental responsibilities. "A biological parent who has never born [sic] a significant responsibility for the child and who has not functioned as a member of the child's family unit is not entitled to the full constitutional protections."¹⁰ Therefore, when a court is determining custody between a parent and a third party, the parent will win absent a showing of compelling reasons for awarding custody to a third party. Compelling reasons include abandonment, persistent neglect of parental responsibilities, extended disruption of parental custody, or other extraordinary circumstances affecting the welfare of the child.¹¹ For a foster parent to maintain custody of a child, the foster parent may attempt to prove unfitness of the biological parent, but need not do so to prevail. If the foster parent is able to show that the biological parent has abdicated his or her responsibilities, the court may determine which placement is in the child's best interests. Even fit parents can lose custody if they previously had abdicated their responsibilities and the court determines that best interest considerations dictate placement with a third party.¹² The passage of a significant period of time, and attachment to the foster parents, may weigh heavily in the court's determination in such a situation.

Placement with Siblings

Adam's outcome might have been different had his placement occurred a few years later. In 2005, the Wisconsin Legislature amended Wis. Stat. section 48.834 to require consideration of placement with siblings before other adoptive placements are considered. During the process of determining Adam's placement, an argument could have been advanced that the legislature has expressed a preference for placement with siblings.

This was the basis for the removal decision in the case of Benjamin. After several out-of-home placements, some with his siblings, some without, Benjamin was placed with a

foster family with the goal of eventual adoption. At first, the transition was difficult, but as Benjamin began to feel accepted by this family, his behavior improved and, by all accounts, he began to thrive.

Attempting to avoid the loss siblings suffer when separated from one another, the state sought to reunite Benjamin with his twin sister and younger brother, who had been placed with a different foster family. Benjamin's foster mother objected to the removal in accordance with her rights under Wis. Stat. section 48.64, and an evidentiary hearing was scheduled.

Discovery

Unlike in Adam's case, counsel for Benjamin's foster mother was not provided access to the county file. The attorney filed a discovery demand, and the guardian ad litem (GAL) objected to the request. The foster mother argued that she should be entitled to see the entire file as it related to Benjamin so that she could present a complete picture to the court. The GAL, joined by the state, successfully argued that the foster parent could see only what the state intended to use at trial. Wis. Stat. section 48.64 provides access, at a reasonable time before a hearing, to "all documents and records to be used at the hearing...."



The law is murky regarding the status of foster parents at a section 48.64 hearing. Section 48.64 allows foster parents to present evidence at a hearing in support of their objection to removal. Yet, the statute is worded such that evidence that may prove the most useful (that is, documents in the state's possession that it does not intend to use) might not be available to foster parents. Plus, it is arguable that the foster parent, unless afforded party status, is unable to initiate or participate in any discovery.

The Children's Code specifically allows for use of all discovery procedures permitted under Wis. Stat. chapter 804.¹³ Chapter 804 refers to discovery by parties.¹⁴ The foster mother in Benjamin's case argued that the legislature clearly intended that foster parents, at the very least, have quasi-party status if they are to meaningfully participate in hearings. Without the ability to fully prepare, how can the

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FASPP Foster and Adoptive Support & Preservation Program

SAAN surviving Allegations of Abuse & Neglect

FASPP's Objective: Supporting Foster and Adoptive Parents Statewide

FASPP's primary aim is to assist foster and adoptive parents throughout the state with a peer-driven network of support and information. Our goal is to maintain foster and adoptive families by providing the necessary resources. If you're feeling disoriented, in need of information, or under an investigation, our highly trained FASPP and SAAN volunteers can help. They can guide you through a range of challenges and provide you with the relevant information or resources you need. FASPP and SAAN comprises of fellow foster or adoptive parents, making it easier for you to connect and share your experiences.

Introducing SAAN, a Peer-Driven Support Network for Foster and Adoptive Families

SAAN is a support network created by peers, with the aim of reducing the trauma experienced by foster and adoptive families during an allegation, without compromising the integrity of the investigation.

Foster parents open their homes to children, aware that they also bring with them their histories and issues.

Foster and adoptive parents face a higher risk of being accused of wrongdoing. Being investigated is a stressful and unsettling experience for anyone, but SAAN is here to help you navigate the process by providing information and support.

If you have any questions in the following areas, please reach out to the designated individuals via email or phone:

- Norma, Chairperson (Advice on general/allegations)
Phone: (920) 922-9627
- Melissa (Focuses on fostering younger children)
Phone: (608) 333-6650
Email: lovedalemelissa@gmail.com
- Lauri (Advice on general/adoption)
Phone: (715) 816-4152 Email: lthorssen@gmail.com
- Tammy (Advice on general/foster)
Phone: (715) 497-3561 Email: tmeesha1973@yahoo.com



SHOULD I LET MY KIDS FAIL? 5 TIPS TO HELP KIDS FACE FAILURE

Can I pour that juice for you? Are you sure that's the right answer? Did you remember to put your homework in your backpack?

We ask our kids lots of questions each day in hopes of avoiding minor messes, stained shirts, and undesirable consequences for them. But mostly, we want to build their confidence.

And if we want to build their confidence, a logical follow-up question would be: Should I let my kids fail?

It's a scary concept. As parents, we want to see our kids succeed in everything they do—whether it's acing their science homework, making the varsity softball team, or simply making a sandwich without smearing peanut butter and jelly all over the kitchen.

To help our children realize success, we often inundate them with constant reminders, prodding questions, and superhero-like maneuvers to rescue them when we see a risk of failure. Or even worse, parents go to deceptive lengths to manufacture success for their children.

But does that hurt more than help?

Why Rescuing Children Does More Harm Than Good

We're well-intentioned parents. We all want our kids to be happy and feel good about themselves and their accomplishments.

But when kids don't experience what it's like to fail, they miss the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and don't learn how to improve for the future. Furthermore, they'll begin to lack the confidence to take risks and won't courageously face

their problems head-on or roll with the punches.

Or, worse still, when we rescue our kids, they may come to believe things always work out—and we all know that's simply not true.

According to child and adolescent psychologist Dr. Jennifer Hartstein, "kids who are constantly bailed out of problem situations will come to avoid situations where they might fail. As they grow older, that can increase anxiety and depression when they need to depend on themselves in tough situations."

When we allow our kids to face failure, they learn to find creative solutions to their problems.

So, let's ask again: Should I let my kids fail?

Making mistakes is a part of everyday life. **Mistakes make us human, not failures.**

Mistakes are a chance to learn and will help us adapt to new and difficult situations as we encounter them throughout life. In the long run, making mistakes and learning from them will give our kids MORE self-confidence and resiliency than when we swoop in to save them from failure. While we don't need to set our kids up for failure, here are 5 strategies to help kids face potential failure.

5 Strategies to Face Failure and Learn From It

1. Take a leap – as a family. Let your kids know that risk-taking is an important value in your family. Share with your children how you've made mistakes and kept on trying. Then, reinforce this belief with your actions. When your kid makes a mistake, don't come down hard—encourage the effort, withhold judgment and be an empathetic ear. When

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MAMA KASCH'S KITCHEN

Jalapeno Popper Soup



A classic appetizer made into a hearty soup! Creamy, cheesy, and packed with potatoes, jalapenos, and bacon, this jalapeno popper soup is the perfect comfort food for lower temperatures.

Prep Time: 15 Minutes Cook Time: 40 Minutes Total Time: 55 minutes

Ingredients

1 pound bacon, chopped * 4 to 6 jalapeno peppers, deseeded and diced * 1/2 cup onion, diced
 2 teaspoons garlic, minced * 1/2 cup all-purpose flour * 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
 3 cups half-and-half * 6 yukon gold potatoes, peeled and chopped into 1 inch-pieces
 8 ounces cream cheese, softened and cut into pieces * 2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded * Kosher salt, to taste
 freshly ground black pepper, to taste * toppings: sliced jalapenos, bacon, and green onion, shredded cheese for garnish

Instructions

1. In a large Dutch oven or pot add the bacon and cook over medium-high heat. Reserve the bacon grease.
2. Add the jalapeños and onions to the pot and cook for about 3 to 4 minutes, or until tender.
3. Stir in the fresh garlic and cook an additional 30 seconds.
4. Add the flour and stir to create a paste.
5. Pour in the chicken broth and half and half. Continually whisk until mixed well.
6. Add the chopped potatoes. Heat over medium-high heat, and bring the soup to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for about 25-30 minutes, or until the potatoes are fork-tender. Stir the soup occasionally while it simmers.
7. Remove the pot from the heat then add the cream cheese and shredded cheese. Stir until the cheeses are melted and combined.
8. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
9. Garnish with desired toppings and serve warm!



WISCONSIN HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WHEAP)

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP) assists eligible households with their heating and electric bills. It is funded by the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Public Benefits (PB) program. The two basic parts of energy assistance are regular benefits and crisis assistance. In addition, a furnace services program is operated under WHEAP.

WHEAP benefits are not guaranteed to eligible households. When funds have been exhausted for a program year, there are no benefits issued to households regardless of eligibility.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is funded by the federal government and focuses primarily on heating assistance for low-income households.

Public Benefits

The Public Benefits (PB) program is funded by fees collected by electric utilities and provides benefits for non-heating electric use. It was created in 1999 as a part of Wisconsin's biennial budget bill and operates a low-income fund into which electric providers in the state contribute an amount primarily generated by a fee added to customers' electric bills. The money in this fund is divided between the energy assistance program and the Weatherization Assistance Program.

The law that established the PB program permits cooperative and municipal utilities to operate a Commitment to Community Program instead of participating in the state PB fund. Customers of utilities choosing to operate a Commitment to Community Program are not eligible for benefits from the state's PB programs (under energy assistance or Weatherization).

INCOME GUIDELINES FOR THE 2023-2024 HOME ENERGY PLUS PROGRAM YEAR (10/01/2023 through 9/30/2024)

60% of State Median Income Guidelines

Household Size	One Month Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,820.67	\$33,848
2	\$3,688.58	\$44,263
3	\$4,556.50	\$54,678
4	\$5,424.50	\$65,094
5	\$6,292.42	\$75,509
6	\$7,160.33	\$85,924
7	\$7,323.00	\$87,876
8	\$7,485.75	\$89,829

For more information including brochures and applications, please visit or <https://energyandhousing.wi.gov/Pages/AgencyResources/energy-assistance.aspx>

Continued from page 8 - In The Best Interest of Children...

foster parent fully participate? More importantly, the court is left to decide the child's best interest based on an incomplete record. There have been no appellate cases addressing this important issue.

Benjamin's foster mother was not treated as a party, was not provided any documents until the day of trial, and was precluded from engaging in any discovery. Nevertheless, the court ruled that the reunification efforts, while laudably motivated, came too late in Benjamin's life. Testimony from two therapists supported the claim that Benjamin was thriving in his foster placement and that recent efforts at reunification had caused significant regression in Benjamin's behavior. He began to wet his bed, was regularly lying and stealing, and had violent outbursts. Benjamin was allowed to stay with his foster mother, and she has begun the adoption process.

The extent of discovery may depend on which court is assigned the case. Down the hall from the courtroom in which Benjamin's hearing took place, the foster parents of Cory were provided full access to the county's file and took depositions of several witnesses. Cory, the youngest of 17 children born to a woman with a cocaine addiction, was removed from her care when he tested positive for cocaine after birth. Cory's father, a man with a lengthy history of drug abuse and a criminal record that included a conviction for sexual assault of a child, wanted custody of Cory. The foster parents objected to Cory's removal. Cory had been in their care since birth. When the change of placement notice was served, Cory was nearly 2 years old.

Standing

A pivotal issue in Cory's case was whether the foster parents had standing to object because a parent, not the state, was requesting the change in placement. The father argued that Wis. Stat. section 48.357,¹⁵ not section 48.64, applied. Section 48.357(2r) allows foster parents to merely make a

statement to the court when a parent requests a change in placement. Foster parents specifically are denied party status under this section. The judge ruled that because placement with the foster parents exceeded six months, section 48.64 applied regardless of who requested the change. The judge's ruling is consistent with Caryn A.-G., in which the court of appeals held that section 48.64 "expressly recognized the right of foster parents to participate and present evidence in hearings that involve 'the placement and care' of a child in their household."¹⁶ A contrary finding would have undermined the ability of foster parents to ever challenge a change in placement or the ability of the court to determine if a change in placement is in the child's best interest. The distinction between sections 48.357 and 48.64, as concerns a foster parent's right to object, appears to be the length of the child's placement with the foster family.¹⁷

Standard and Burden of Proof

The best interest of the child is the standard by which changes of placement are to be determined. The 2005 amendments to the Children's Code clarify that the petitioner has the burden of proof to show, by clear and convincing evidence, that the Department of Health and Family Services or other child welfare agency's decision to change a child's placement is not in that child's best interest.¹⁸

The Children's Code fails to precisely delineate the factors the court must consider in making a best interest determination. However, the court is free to consider any factor that bears on the issue of best interest, as well as the factors enumerated in the Family Code.¹⁹ The court's decision should comply with the stated goals of the Children's Code. Best interest considerations are always of paramount importance.²⁰ A goal of Wis. Stat. chapter 48 is to preserve the unity of the family. However, the legislature included language in the

(Continued on page 13)



WFAPA's Contribution to Family Promise of Monroe County

During our 2023 Fall Conference, WFAPA generously donated to Family Promise of Monroe County, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing homeless and low-income families with resources to achieve sustainable independence.

Family Promise offers a range of services including homeless prevention and diversion, shelter, and stabilization. The prevention program is specifically designed to help families avoid becoming homeless, while the diversion program

provides an alternative to shelter for those already experiencing homelessness. Their shelter program offers safe and secure housing on a rotational basis for up to 90 days. Lastly, the stabilization program provides continued support for families who have found housing.

Discover Ways to Support Family Promise of Monroe County

Family Promise of Monroe County is always on the lookout for donations and volunteers to support their worthy cause. If you missed the conference but would still like to help, visit their website at www.familypromiseofmonroecounty.com to make a donation.

Continued from page 9 - Should I Let My Kids Fail?

risk-taking is a family value, kids will WANT to take on new challenges and experiences,—whether it's trying the scariest roller coaster in the park or signing up for calculus. You'll also be more comfortable trying things outside your comfort zone—like picking up a hammer for Habitat for Humanity, learning a new language or starting a new exercise program.

Difficult things are less difficult when done as a team—encourage your family to be the core catalyst for risk-taking and you'll be amazed how courageous you all become.

2. It's okay for failure to be familiar. No matter what it is—tying our shoes, sinking free throws or diagramming a sentence—we're bound to have a few hiccups along the way as we learn. Make sure your kids know to expect some failures as they try new things and let them know that it's normal and expected. Emphasize the positives of learning from your mistakes and how we can learn from our miscues.

Wendy Flynn said, "Allow yourself to be a beginner, no one starts off being excellent." When kids (and adults) truly believe this, it's possible to see failures with rose-colored glasses. Instead of setbacks, failures become steps forward to life-long learning and success.

3. Look at those who have risen above. Some of the most successful people in the world, from business tycoons to all-star athletes, had to overcome major obstacles and failures throughout their careers—think Michael Jordan, Steve Jobs, Oprah Winfrey, to name a few. Share these stories with your children and pepper the conversation with personal stories of how you've improved following difficulties in your own life.

4. Run a post-game analysis. While we naturally want to step in when our kids fail, we need to avoid rescuing them. We can, however, support them and do a run-down of what happened and what to try next time.



Try empathizing, saying, "I can tell that was hard for you. Now that you've been through this, what would you try next time?" Don't solve all the problems for them, but allow them to build up their critical thinking skills and develop a plan for the future.

5. Support your student by letting go. Many times parents feel just as much pressure for their kids to bring home a straight-A report card as the students do. School is one of the hardest

places to let our kids fail, but it's one of the best—and most important—places for them to learn to take on responsibility for their own success.

Learning to manage assignments and practices, dealing with teachers and classmates, and improving their work will all serve them well as they head to college and the workforce. This doesn't mean you need to completely withdraw yourself from your kids' academic responsibilities or extracurricular activities—just offer the right kind of support.

Be clear that your child's academics are completely their responsibility, and give them the tools and resources to solve problems when they arise. Help them to recognize when they may be struggling and how to deal with it—talking to the teacher after class or studying with a friend, for example. Run through how a meeting with a teacher to discuss a test grade might go—but make sure your student goes to the teacher, not you.

Final Thoughts

If the report card comes home with poor grades, let your kid experience the consequences of the situation to truly learn an important lesson. Encourage and support them in raising their grades, but make sure the responsibility to improve is in their hands.

As they earn grades that they've worked so hard to achieve, they'll be proud of what they've done, and they'll have a great work ethic and sense of responsibility to carry them through college and beyond.

Disappointment is a regular aspect of all our lives, so the answer to "should I let my kids fail?" is clear: giving our kids the tools they need to roll with the punches and bounce back from failure will be a lesson that will serve them the rest of their life.

As much as we'd like to, we can't protect our kids forever, but we can give them the skills to be the best they can be. Early experiences with failure will help them make tough decisions as they grow older and ultimately guide their successes.

Article written by: Amy McCready and taken from Positive Parenting Solutions at website:
<https://www.positiveparentingsolutions.com/parenting/should-i-let-my-kids-fail?fbclid=IwAR1KAYW8VH1PH36ChqZZedwWsTjx425d1uUDgUER5ErCc>

**WFAPA'S
 SPRING
 CONFERENCE**

**APRIL 12-14, 2024
 GREEN BAY
 Radisson Hotel &
 Conference Center**

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Children's Code to advise courts that, when appropriate, they have the authority not to

reunite a child with his or her family. Furthermore, Wis. Stat. section 48.01 states that "courts and agencies responsible for child welfare should also recognize that instability and impermanence in family relationships are contrary to the welfare of children and should therefore recognize the importance of eliminating the need for children to wait unreasonable periods of time for their parents to correct the conditions that prevent their safe return to the family."

Effect of Bonding

The law does not define what constitutes an "unreasonable" period of time. A consequence of lengthy foster care placement is that at the same time a biological parent is working on conditions for return, the child is becoming bonded and attached to his or her caregiver, particularly if the same foster family provides care throughout the out-of-home placement. At a change of placement hearing, the foster parent or GAL may request, or the court on its own motion may order, that a bonding assessment be performed to assist the court in making its determination. In a bonding assessment, a psychologist evaluates the bonds that have been formed between the child and his or her biological parents and between the child and the child's foster parents. The strength of these bonds may be the determining factor in whether a child should be removed from a caregiver. Bonding is the basic link of trust between child and caregiver.²¹ When an infant's needs consistently are met by a primary caregiver, a trusting relationship develops. Successful bonding leads to attachment, the foundation of future healthy relationships. Disruptions in secure attachments can lead to a wide array of developmental difficulties for the child.²² In Cory's case, the court heard testimony from professionals who opined that Cory had placed with the biological parent.

Some Decisions May Indirectly Affect Foster Families
Recent Wisconsin decisions that do not deal directly with

rights afforded to foster parents nevertheless affect the relationship between foster parents and children in foster care. For example, when the Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed the termination of parental rights of Jodie W. to her son Max, its decision had a profound effect on the foster parents who had provided care for Max for the prior four years and necessarily affected the child's future placement and thus security.²³ Issues the court addressed were whether the birth mother entered a knowing and voluntary plea to the CHIPS allegations and whether a termination of an incarcerated parent can occur when the conditions for return are impossible. These issues do not directly relate to foster parents; however, the outcome of the case most certainly did. Rather than wait for the state to remove Max and reunite him with his mother, the foster parents moved for permanent guardianship.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court is considering another case in which its decision will affect foster parents and the foster children in their care for several years. The court heard oral argument in February in *State v. Bobby G.*²⁴ At issue is whether a biological father has a constitutional right in the "opportunity" to develop a relationship with his child. The biological father did not know of the child's existence until the petition to terminate his rights was served. If the court determines that such a right exists, the long-term placement of this special needs child with foster parents who have taken exceptional care of him, will be jeopardized. The potential exists for the foster parents to prepare for litigation in the context of either a proposed guardianship or objection to a change in placement.

Conclusion

Although foster care is intended to be a temporary situation pending permanent placement of a child or return to a biological parent, the legislature has given foster parents certain rights. An objection to a change of placement when a child has been in a foster placement for more than six months entitles the foster parent to a full evidentiary hearing. The extent of the foster parent's participation in that hearing is not fully defined in the law. Attorneys need to be aware of and able to address notice, standing, attachment, and discovery issues. Legislative clarification, particularly as it relates to the status of the foster parent and his or her right

The rest of the endnotes are at the top of page 14

PROJECT LINUS



Thank you to Project Linus of Green Bay for donating many homemade quilts. Their mission is to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are serious ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer "blanketeers." The other

part of their mission is to provide a rewarding and fun service opportunity for interested individuals and groups in local communities, for the benefit of children.

PAJAMA PROGRAM

Pajama's Program's philosophy is that every child has the right to a good night. Yet, thousands of children across the United States will go to sleep tonight and their bedtime will be missing something. They may be feeling alone and afraid, in a bed that isn't theirs, in a shelter that isn't a home or with families who wish they could give them more. These children have one thing in common: Their 24-Hour Good Day Loop is incomplete.

At Pajama Program, they know that this doesn't have to be their story. They can do something that not only validates their worth and shows them love, but that also transforms their nights and their days. By offering the magical gifts of pajamas and books, they bring a caring bedtime ritual into their lives. Changing out of their clothes and into warm, cozy pajamas lets them shed the stresses of their day, trading them for feelings of warmth and hope. With enchanting stories, their imaginations are opened, helping them to dream again.

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to discovery, is needed for the full intent of the legislation to be realized. Article taken from Wisconsin Lawyer on September 7, 2007. Written by: Elizabeth A. Neary, Marquette 1983, is a partner with Grady, Hayes & Neary LLC, Waukesha. She practices in adoption and related children's issues and business litigation.

Endnotes - 1U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report. 2U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., National Adoption and Foster Care Statistics 2005. 3U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS Report) 6, at 7, 3, 4; Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute: Foster Care Facts. 4Pub. L. No. 105-89, 111 Stat. 2115. 5U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Administration for Children and Families; HHS Awards Adoption Bonuses, HHS News (Sept. 10, 2001); Evan Endnotes - 1U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report. 2U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., National Adoption and Foster Care Statistics 2005. 3U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS Report) 6, at 7, 3, 4; Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute: Foster Care Facts. 4Pub. L. No. 105-89, 111 Stat. 2115. 5U.S. Dep't of Wisconsin Law

Health & Human Servs., Administration for Children and Families; HHS Awards Adoption Bonuses, HHS News (Sept. 10, 2001); Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute: Foster Care Facts. 6 Wis. Stat. § 48.64. 7Id. 8Wis. Stat. § 48.13 (Children in Need of Protection or Services). 9405 U.S. 645 (1972). 10Barstad v. Frazier, 118 Wis. 2d 549, 562-63, 348 N.W.2d 479 (1984). 11Richard D. v. Rebecca G. (Caryn A.-G.), 228 Wis. 2d 658, 663, 599 N.W.2d 90 (1999). 12Id.; see also Barstad, 118 Wis. 2d at 569 n.9; LaChapell v. Mawhinney, 66 Wis. 2d 679, 683, 225 N.W.2d 501 (1975); Howard M. v. Jean R., 196 Wis. 2d 16, 24, 539 N.W.2d 104 (Ct. App. 1995). 13Wis. Stat. § 48.293(4). 14Wis. Stat. § 804.01. 15Wis. Stat. § 48.357. 16Caryn A.-G., 228 Wis. 2d at 660. 17Another potential issue of standing arises when the caretaker is not a licensed foster parent but instead is a relative with whom the child has been placed and from whom placement is being removed. 18Wis. Stat. § 48.64(4) (c). 19See Wis. Stat. § 767.41(5). 20Wis. Stat. § 48.01. 21Lawrence B. Smith, "Bonding and Attachment - When it Goes Right," Washington Parent Magazine, <www.washingtonparent.com/articles/9711/bonding.htm>. 22Goldstein, Feud, & Solnit, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child 31-34. 23Kenosha County Dep't of Human Servs. v. Jodie W., 2006 WI 93, 293 Wis. 2d 530, 716 N.W.2d 845. 24State v. Bobby G. (unpublished decision; petition for review granted) 2006 WI 126, 724 N.W.2d 202 (2006).

The President's Message

Dear Members,

Important Update from WFAPA Regarding Your Newsletter!

We are thrilled to announce that we will now be sending your WFAPA newsletter electronically! This is a huge step forward for both you and us. If you have not provided us with your email address, please send your name and email address to twfapa@new.rr.com. We will ensure that you are added to our system. Additionally, you can access the newsletter on our website or Facebook page.

We just wrapped up our epic Fall Conference, and boy was it a blast! We mingled with fresh faces, shot the breeze, and had some deep chats. It was fantastic to see our members come together to share their ups and downs. The cherry on top? Our guest speakers, Rob Scheer and Stacey Wood, totally rocked it! Now, we're already gearing up for the Spring Conference, kicking off on April 12, 2024, at the glorious Radisson in Green Bay. Don't miss out on the fun!

Upsetting News from the State: End of Sponsorship for WFAPA

On Friday evening, the WFAPA members were informed of some unfortunate news shared via email. Shannon Braden, addressing the Treasurer and WFAPA, expressed her gratitude for the organization's support of Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive families. She then broke the news that DCF's ongoing sponsorship of WFAPA will be ending next year. While she acknowledged the challenges of securing funding, Shannon listed two grant options that could be pursued through competitive procurement processes. Lastly, Shannon thanked the team for their unwavering commitment to the cause.

Great news! As of today, we have received the check and it has been deposited into our bank account. However, we must follow up on an email from the 'Out-of-Home Care section Manager.' It seems like this could be a form of punishment for not joining DCF a few years ago. We prefer to remain autonomous, as we did in the past. We will keep everyone updated on the situation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at twfapa@new.rr.com.

November marks the start of Adoption month - a special time to ponder and plan for your little ones. Happy Holidays to you and yours! Savor every mouthwatering bite of your turkey, ham, rolls, cookies, and pies. Laugh till it hurts, cherish your loved ones, and don't forget to sprinkle gratitude and kindness on top of everything!

Love and Light,

Tina

FOSTERING CHANGE

Fostering Change, is a weekly audio and video podcast hosted by Rob Scheer about how communities can come together to bring dignity and hope to children in the foster care system. Guests will include former youth in foster care, foster parents, celebrities touched by the foster care system, child welfare advocates, and everyday people working to improve the lives of kids in care. Rob brings a sense of positivity and humor to his conversations and discusses issues regarding foster care, adoption, LGBTQ+ and other timely and topical issues. Now in its 4th season, Fostering Change has been ranked the #1 Podcast for Adoption and Foster Care issues two consecutive years. If you have a story to tell as it relates to foster care or any questions, please email fosteringchange@comfortcases.org. And please follow Comfort Cases@comfortcases.



Happy National Adoption Month!

Win

Free Registration & Room



Get ready to blossom at our Spring Conference! And who knows? You might just be the lucky duck who takes home a prize!



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WFAPA's Adoption Quilt

Our WFAPA Adoption Quilt Project!

We're excited to announce that we're creating another WFAPA Quilt and we want to hear from you. If you're an adoptive parent or were adopted yourself, we would love to share your story. Every adoption experience is unique and we want to celebrate the diversity of these stories. Adopting a child is an emotional and powerful experience, and just like pregnancy and birth, no two stories are alike.

Creating a Beautiful Quilt with the Power of Storytelling

Our quilt will be made up of many stunning creations, each woven together with other quilt squares to form a larger and stronger whole. As we add more pieces, our quilt grows and becomes even more remarkable. Once finished, the quilt will not only be a masterpiece of art, but it will also hold countless stories that make it truly one-of-a-kind.



Crafting Quilt Squares During Our Fall Conference

During our Fall Conference this past October, we organized a table where attendees who were either adopted or had adopted someone could create a quilt square. Those who participated in this activity were entered into a drawing for a Halloween/Fall Decoration Basket.

Receiving a Blank Cloth Square and Fabric Marker

Would you like to participate in our adoption quilt project? Reach out to Sherry Benson, WFAPA Treasurer and Social Worker Liaison, and she will send you a blank cloth square and fabric markers along with return postage. To complete your submission, please write a brief article about what your adoption means to you (without revealing any identifying information) and mail it along with your quilt square and markers. You can contact Sherry by calling or texting her at (715) 923-1124 or by sending an email to misssherry2@yahoo.com.



Becoming a Member: What You Can Expect.

Join WFAPA's Leadership in Advocating for Foster and Adoptive Families!

WFAPA's leadership has been instrumental in educating policymakers and involving foster and adoptive parents in discussions surrounding issues that impact the foster and adoptive system.

We would love for you to join us in this journey! Our members are the backbone of our organization, enabling us to continue to advocate and influence public policy on behalf of foster and adoptive children and parents across Wisconsin.

Creating a community of foster, adoptive, and kinship families is one of the most effective ways to amplify our collective voice.

As a member, you'll gain access to numerous benefits and information, including:

- Four yearly newsletters.
- Up-to-date details on State-level news.
- Peer support and guidance for allegations.
- Information on scholarships.
- Reduced conference rates.
- Opportunities to get involved in foster care projects.

WFAPA is a 501(3)(C) non-profit organization comprised of a volunteer Board of Directors.

Joining is easy!

You can visit wfapa.org and click on the Membership tab, or mail membership form to:



Michelle Ward
W7018 Discovery Drive
Fond du Lac, WI 54937



WFAPA Membership Form

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____

I am a Foster/Adoptive Parent. (circle one) I have fostered for _____ years.

I am with _____ agency.

Would you be willing to help out with WFAPA? ____ Yes ____ No

I wish to join the effort:

____ Single Adult Membership, \$10

____ Friends of WFAPA, \$5 or \$_____ billed monthly for 12 months.