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March/ April Newsletter 2016



## **Director's Letter**

### Steel Box & Velvet Linings



Several years ago I attended a training in which parents and helping professionals were challenged to “be the steel box with a velvet lining” with their children. The steel box representing the structure and firm resolve our children desperately need from us. The velvet lining representing the softness and love in our eyes they also desperately need from us. Why is this important? Well, very simply, both qualities are vitally necessary in helping our children who have experienced trauma to feel safe. When children know what to expect consistently and learn that limits are firm no matter how much they challenge and push you, they begin to learn that you can be trusted. This leads to feelings of safety. Just as important is for children to see love, nurturance, care, and concern in your eyes instead of anger, frustration, and resentment. It is only when our children feel safe that they can begin the process of healing from their trauma and learning new ways of engaging with the world around them. Both of these qualities are important. Safety won't be felt unless you demonstrate both. Is this easy to do? No, not at all. It takes practice, patience, and perseverance. But it is so important. God bless you as you take this important task on.

May God bless you and your family -

Bryan Forney  
Executive Director



## Clinical Article- Car Games

How do we keep our children entertained in the car?

It is difficult for children to be in the car for long periods of time; it is more difficult for our children who are in foster care. Here are some suggestions for



fun car games that do not require any extra materials.

- “That’s not something we see every day!” Karen Burkhart, a mother of two elementary school-age boys who travels regularly between the United States and Canada, plays this game every time they visit her family and friends in Canada. Alpacas, French-language signs and ferry crossings have been among the creative things the Burkhart family has spotted during long car journeys. Burkhart comments, “We have some good laughs!” Try this activity either as a game you play the entire time you are in the car, or as a speed game to see who can spot the most unusual or out-of-the-ordinary item during a set time interval.
- “I wonder where that car is going?” A fun game to play with very young children. Choose interesting vehicles and make up stories, such as a grandma visiting her grandkids, a family traveling to go camping, or a big rig operator and what’s in his haul. Another way to make this game educational is to look at the state on the car’s license plate and determine if the car is going toward or away from the state.
- Category ABCs. Pick a category such as fruits and vegetables, first names or even PBS KIDS characters and go through each letter of the alphabet, taking turns coming up with items beginning with the letter. For an extra challenge, go backward through the alphabet.
- The Alphabet Hunt. For younger children, instead of trying to think of words that start with a certain letter, encourage letter recognition by working your way through the alphabet visually, suggests Anna Grashorn, mom to a young son in Columbus, Ohio. She encourages using signs, billboards, license plates or anything else outside your car to work your way through the ABCs.

- The License Plate Game. Make a list of all the different states' license plates you find on your route. To make the game more interesting, have goals and prizes, such as a special snack when you find 10 states or a prize for the first person to find a license plate from a state with a certain letter, such as N, in its name.
  - “Let’s Google It!” If you have access to a smartphone, you can Google interesting town names, historical markers or other items that catch your family’s attention, suggests Townsend. Alternatively, make a list of some of the most unusual signs or town names you see and Google them once you return home as a way to relive the fun of your vacation.
  - Curiosity Questions. Most children love to talk about themselves, so this game is a natural winner. Here’s a list of questions we’ve used in my own family to get you started, but chances are you will begin to think of your own questions to use. Have each family member answer each question, and be surprised at some of the answers you discover.
    - o What makes you happy?
    - o What is your favorite sport to play?
    - o What are your three favorite vegetables?
    - o Where is one place you’ve never been that you would like to go?
    - o What do you like best about your friend \_\_\_\_\_?
    - o If we could open a zoo in our backyard, what five animals would you choose?
    - o If you could choose your meals for one day, what would you choose?
      - o What is your favorite season? Why?
      - o What do you think our next family car should be like?
    - o If you could trade places with someone for a day, who would you choose?
- All of these games have been used successfully by young families, perhaps even your own! Don’t forget other classic games such as I-Spy and Twenty Questions. With these ideas in your back pocket, your next road journey will end with you not only reaching your destination but also having gained some fun memories along the way.

Found at <http://www.pbs.org/parents/summer/road-trip-games-for-kids/> and games written by Jessica Efirid

[Link to my website](#)

## **Training Institute**

### Announcements

#### New Core Class

- Caregivers will begin to see a new “Core” class on your ITNAs called Safe Crisis Management for Caregivers. This is a new de-escalation training being offered in 2016 that is in place of the old Behavior Support & Management Course. Please be sure to sign up to take the next class.

## Important Reminders

### Outside Training Forms

- There has been an increasing number of foster parents attending outside trainings. Remember to contact, Alicia Ajiboye, Training Manager, if you have questions about attending trainings outside of our agency. In order for outside training credit to be accepted, please be sure that you turn in your certificates and complete the most updated outside training form. The updated version of the form can be found on our website in the "FOY Members" section. Please contact Andy at [adodds@focusonyouth.com](mailto:adodds@focusonyouth.com) if you need assistance logging on.

### Fees

- Fees listed on our training brochures and website are for those who want to attend FOY training outside of our agency. Foster parent trainings offered through FOY are **FREE** to current FOY foster parent and alternative care or respite providers.

### Training Needs

- Did you know that some of the foster parent meeting topics and other webinars can help meet the needs of some of your training requirements? When caregivers are initially licensed, caregivers are required to take our core topics. After you re-certify, you no longer need to repeat those core classes. But instead you are encouraged to take other classes related to those four categories. FP meetings typically count towards helping caregivers meet your requirements. On our website there is a new section "Meets Required Topics (FOY Parents only):" that offers a key to what classes count for. FOY is committed to helping you meet all of your training needs. If you ever need help figuring out which trainings to take you can contact Training Manager, Alicia Ajiboye, at 513-644-1030.

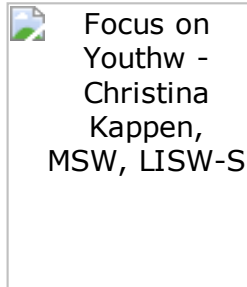
### Attendance

- An area we need your help on is with registering for classes. We are having an increase in the number of people registering for classes and then not coming. We always prepare food according to how many people are registered, and get childcare volunteers based on the number of children signed up. If your plans change, will you please contact us with as much advance notice as possible? That will help tremendously. Thanks so much!

[Click here to see upcoming trainings](#)



## **Getting to Know: Christina Kappen**



Christina has worked at Focus since May 2004. She is the Program Manager for Foster Care and Adoption. She wanted to work at Focus on Youth, because her parents are adoptive parents. She felt it was a natural fit to work at Focus on Youth. Her parents were going through the adoptive process when she was picking her major and she thought social work was a perfect fit. Her hobbies include spending time with her two boys, using her Fitbit and she loves to watch Dawson's Creek. Her favorite food is pizza. She loves the color purple. Her favorite quote is "Be the change you wish to see in the world". The one place she would like to go in the world is Hawaii.

## **NHA Moments**

Amy-It is amazing that you are still willing to help other foster parents with respite regardless of how challenging and busy your foster children keep you. Thank you!- Lydia

Keri-You may never know how big of a difference you have already made in the lives of the three foster children in your home. You work very hard to advocate and change their lives. I hope you know that you are a pseudo caseworker, GAL and most importantly a great foster parent. Thank you! - Lydia

Katie and Brian-Taking children in a moment's notice is hard enough. I appreciate both of you for going the extra mile and helping out birth parent in the time of need. You are both great advocates for the foster children in your home. -Lydia

Manuel and Deena-Teenagers can be challenging however; both of you have done an amazing job in providing opportunity in a loving home to their

foster child. - Lydia

Whitney and Maria-You have forever changed the lives of three young girls. Thank you for giving them a loving home.- Lydia

Melingqua- You always appear to be up-beat and laid back, which creates a comfortable atmosphere in your home. Congrats on your family! –Patty

Emily- I have notice how much time, energy, and commitment you have given to your kids! You have done an amazing job. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. – Amber

Ariel- I noticed how helpful you were with the 2 little girls that stayed in your home for respite. It shows your kindness. – Patty

Rachel and Tony- You are doing a great job with your first placement! Keep up the great work! – Savannah

Christine- You are doing a great job at school and at home. I'm so proud of all of your hard work. Keep it up! – Ms. Savannah

Breana- Great job in school! Your hard work and dedication is definitely paying off. I am very proud of you! – Amber

Gwen- I really appreciate how flexible you are with your youth. This shows that you value their individuality and care for who they are. - Alicia and Leah

### **A Special Thank You to Our Volunteers!**

Carl and Shelba- 7hrs  
Mark- 3hrs  
Middletown Christian  
Cheerleaders-2.5 hrs each  
PNC family and employees-  
2.5 hrs each



### **Announcements**

We received a box of donated items. There were some infant clothing and younger adult clothing new with tags. Some teenage girl room decor and purses. As well as summer items- floats and goggles. If you are interested in any of the items contact your youth specialist and they will let you know if any of the items are still available in the clothing closet. Thank you!



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