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Advanced Parenting Workshops

Interact with other class members and explore advanced parenting concepts.

- ▶ **Lying**
 - *Sept. 1st – 19th 2008*
 - To enroll go to ...
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FPC Reader's Question

The Connections staff wants to hear from you. What do you like about this monthly newsletter? What would you like to see more of? Are the articles helpful? Please email us at lisa@northwestmedia.com with your ideas. Thank you.

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Fostering Success in School

Children in foster care struggle against the odds to succeed in school. Abuse, trauma, emotional upheaval, and frequent placement changes are typical stories for them, and those challenges are compounded by the need for them to regularly adjust to new schools, teachers, classmates, and rules.

The statistics are grim:

- ▶ 54% of young adults who grew up in the system completed high school
- ▶ nearly 33% of children in non-relative care failed or repeated one or more grades
- ▶ 80% failed one grade by the third grade
- ▶ 50% were identified as withdrawn
- ▶ 33% were identified as aggressive
- ▶ 54% experience disabling conditions, including behavioral and emotional disabilities
- ▶ 25-33% are enrolled in special education

Poor communication between schools and agencies can lead to lost or incomplete school records, forcing kids to repeat classes, maybe even repeat a grade or delay graduation. On a more basic level, the teacher and school won't have the child's history, and won't be able to build on the child's strengths and prepare for his challenges.

A committed foster parent or advocate can make a huge difference. A simple thing like pushing a caseworker to track down school records is a great start. Regularly meeting with the student and teacher together can help improve the commitment that the child and the teacher make to each other, spurring the child to work harder in class and the teacher to maybe be a bit more patient and understanding with the child. Teachers and schools want their students to succeed and welcome involvement from foster or adoptive parents.

For more information on helping foster kids succeed in school, sign up for the Foster Parent College course, "Working With Schools."



Back to School

The back to school season is busy for most families, but for foster and adoptive families it can be downright turbulent. Here are a few tips to help smooth the transition.

Medical – Check the child’s records for a vaccination form, date of last physical, and other info your school district requires. Consider scheduling a “getting to know you” appointment with your doctor.

Paperwork – Make sure you have the name, address and phone number of the last school the child attended, plus other required information.

Education plans – Ask your caseworker what, if any, education plans or services the child had before. Check that the school registrar and counselor have what they need for your child.

Lifesaver Card – Write up a small card with essential info he may not yet have memorized, like your address and phone number, his bus number, the name and number of a helpful relative or neighbor in case of emergency. Make a couple of copies and give him one for his backpack and one for his pocket. Laminate the cards if he has memory or attention problems and might need to carry them around a while.

Take a tour – If the child is bussing, biking or walking to school, practice the route until he is comfortable. Tour the school. Visit the classroom. Play on the playground. Practice opening his locker.

Meet ‘n’ greet – Attend open houses and orientations. Talk with the teacher and school secretaries so they know the child and have a

general idea of his challenges and strengths. If he’s willing, have the child do the talking.

Prepare his story – Help the child come up with a way to describe his living situation that he is comfortable with. He needs to know that his story is private and he has a right to keep unpleasant details from other children.

Stay connected – Hide supportive notes in his lunch box, his notebook, wherever you want, so when he finds them he feels a little glow of connection and caring.

Care-Free Cooking – School Lunches

Back to school lunches can be fun and nourishing. Here are a few lunch bag favorites from our kitchens.

Ants On A Raft

Ingredients:

- ▶ 1 celery stalk
- ▶ 2 tablespoons peanut butter or cream cheese
- ▶ Raisins
- ▶ Chopped nuts, optional



Spread peanut butter or cream cheese on the celery and top with the “ants,” or raisins. For Ants and Dirt On a Raft, top with chopped nuts, too.

Happy Rolls

Ingredients:

- ▶ 1 whole grain roll, cut in half (face)
- ▶ 2 tablespoons cream cheese or peanut butter (skin)
- ▶ Thin strip of bell pepper or celery (mouth)
- ▶ ¼ cup carrot curls, made by using a vegetable peeler to shave off thin strips (hair)
- ▶ 2 grapes (eyes)
- ▶ 1 grape (nose)



Spread the peanut butter or cream cheese on the roll. Assemble a smiley face using the ingredients listed above. Cover with a square of waxed paper, then cover with the top half of the roll. Leave a note on the sandwich bag telling your child to look inside his sandwich before eating. Better yet, have him make his own face. Substitute other vegetables or fruits for those listed to suit your child’s taste.

Back to School Word Find – Hang this page on your fridge for your children’s enjoyment.

For extra fun, look up words you don’t know in a dictionary or on Wikipedia.com.

Word Key:

Book, Mathematics, Leaf, Notebook, Autumn, Recess, Teacher, apple, Principal, Classroom, Library, Daydream, Pencil, Science, Cafeteria, Poem, Protractor, Desk, Homework, Backpack

R	C	A	W	B	Q	W	U	S	C	I	E	N	C	E	R	Z	N
E	I	I	D	W	O	A	N	O	T	E	B	O	O	K	I	K	P
L	O	R	X	X	T	F	O	R	E	H	C	A	E	T	P	N	U
I	F	E	C	R	Z	B	F	A	E	L	S	S	E	C	E	R	D
B	H	T	E	S	C	L	A	S	S	R	O	O	M	W	J	Q	E
R	E	E	N	P	R	I	N	C	I	P	A	L	R	D	Z	V	S
A	L	F	F	Y	S	C	I	T	A	M	E	H	T	A	M	V	K
R	P	A	L	I	C	N	E	P	N	K	R	O	W	E	M	O	H
Y	P	C	R	O	T	C	A	R	T	O	R	P	S	J	J	I	T
D	A	Y	D	R	E	A	M	V	F	A	M	O	Y	W	I	Q	F

Kids Krafts

Corral band-aids, pocket-sized hand-sanitizer, a packet of tissues, individually wrapped glasses wipes, lip balm – whatever you need – into a plastic travel soap box you decorate yourself.

Nifty Necessities Box

- ▶ Plastic soap box, any color
- ▶ Assorted craft supplies
- ▶ Craft glue

Use whatever supplies you want—mini pom-poms, glue, google eyes, sequins—to

decorate a plastic soap box however you like. When the glue is dry, put all your essentials in there and voila! You are ready for anything! Make a couple and keep one in your school desk and one in your school bag.

Magnetic Bookmarks

- ▶ 1 sheet card stock paper
- ▶ Scrap fabric
- ▶ Small magnetic strips
- ▶ Glue

Cut the card stock into 2-inch by 10-inch strips and fold in half, then unfold. Cut the fabric into 2-inch by 10-inch strips and fold it in half, then iron it to create a crease (get an adult to help you with the iron), then unfold it. Glue the fabric to

the paper, matching up the fold lines.

When the glue is dry, cut the magnets into 2 ½-inch by 1-inch strips and stick them together. Put glue on the magnets and glue them to the inside of the bookmark, but be careful not to glue the magnets together. When the glue dries, you’ll have a colorful bookmark that never falls out of your book!

Creative Youth

I Am

I know what I know
 I know who I am
 I am a young, beautiful, sophisticated black woman
 I know what I know
 I know who I am
 I am a talented, outgoing, hardworking black woman
 I know what I know
 I know who I am
 I am a kind, caring, loving black woman
 I know what I know
 I know who I am
 I am a modest, concerned black woman
 I am passionate. I am loyal. I am trustworthy.
 I am Keisha. Do you know who you are?
by Keisha, 20, California