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Advanced Parenting Workshops

- Anger & Lying
  - June 7th
  - July 5th
  - To enroll, visit FosterParentCollege.com®

Sound Off!

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 ideas to: press@northwestmedia.com

Thank you.

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Foster Children and Cruelty to Animals, Part 1
By Charley Joyce, LICSW

Part 2 will be published in the July Connections and will explore strategies for helping children who are cruel to animals.

Innocent or Problematic?

Cruelty to animals is a childhood behavior that deserves attention from parents and professionals involved in the care of children. The initial step in assessing the seriousness of a child’s abuse of animals involves reviewing the intent, frequency, and pattern of the child’s behavior.

At times, children will innocently mistreat an animal. For example, a young child may pull a cat’s tail, but not understand that it is hurtful to the cat. The cat would generally react to the child, startling the child and causing the child to feel a sense of regret for hurting the cat. Ideally, a parent would also explain to the child that this is hurtful to the cat, reinforcing the idea that animals need to be treated with care.

If the mistreatment was an innocent act by the child the behavior will usually be extinguished by the cat’s response, reinforced by the parent’s explanation.

Unfortunately, if a child consistently hurts animals, seeks animals to hurt, and does not respond to parental interventions, a problem could Why Would a Foster Child be Cruel to Animals?

We know that children are in foster care often as a result of abuse and neglect. Being abused physically or sexually, or being neglected, can cause a complex mixture of hurt and angry feelings in the child who has been victimized.

These feelings can become overwhelming for the child and can be acted out through a combination of internalized and externalized behavior. As a result, a child who has been abused and is angry might displace the anger onto a vulnerable animal. The cruelty can become a way to release internalized aggression that they cannot express in appropriate ways. There might also be an emotional gratification for the child in being able to be in complete control and dominance of an animal’s safety, pain and life.

Another possible explanation is the psychological process of reenactment, in which a victim reenacts her abuse. For example, I once consulted in regard to a girl who at a young age was forced to be sexual with dogs. Even after her removal from the home where she was sexually abused she continued to engage in this behavior with dogs.

Charley Joyce, LICSW, has been a social worker for 35 years. He is the co-author of the book “Behavior with a Purpose” and a contributing author of the book “Assessing Youth Behavior.” He is a supervisor for PATH, ND Inc. and teaches part-time in the MSW program at the University of North Dakota. He is on the faculty of Foster Parent College and collaborated on “Working With Birth Families 1: Visitation” and “Grief & Loss in the Care System.” For more about Mr. Joyce, visit: www.charleyjoyce.com.
**Behavior With a Purpose Trainings**

Charley Joyce, LICSW, a faculty member of FosterParentCollege.com, is available to provide trainings for foster, adoptive, and kinship parents and child welfare professionals. Charley has been a social worker in mental health and child welfare for 35 years. He is the coauthor of the book “Behavior with a Purpose” and a contributing author of “Assessing Youth Behavior.” For a complete listing of Charley’s trainings and contact information please visit www.charleyjoyce.com.

**Taking the Bite Out of Summer**

Summer time is fun time, but it’s also prime time for injuries and accidents. In this issue of Connections, we take a look at preventing and coping with animal bites. In July, we’ll learn about heat stress and other summer hazards.

**Bee Stings**

Most bee stings will hurt for a day or two but aren’t dangerous.

Try to prevent stings by teaching children:

- Stay calm around bees; when bees are scared they attack
- Don’t swat at or run from bees; that scares them
- Avoid perfumes, lip balms and lotions that have a sweet, fruity or floral scent
- Keep food and drinks covered so they don’t attract bees
- Bees are drawn to bright “flowery” colors like yellow, pink, orange and red

If stung, don’t squeeze to get the stinger out. If the bee has left the stinger behind, as evidenced by blackish particles on the skin, try scraping these off with a credit card. Do not squeeze the stinger; venom still in the sac may get into your system. Wash with warm water and soap. Apply a paste made of meat tenderizer or baking soda and a few drops of water. If after a couple of days the sting site becomes hot, red, or has other signs of infection, consult a doctor.

If the sting victim has trouble breathing or has other extreme reactions, call 911. Allergies to bee stings can be fatal.

**Dog Bites**

4.5 million Americans are bitten by dogs each year, and one in five dog bites results in injuries that require medical attention. Children age 5-9 are the most common victims.

To prevent dog bites, teach children to follow these basic safety tips, and review them regularly:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog
- Do not run from a dog or scream
- Remain motionless (e.g., “be still like a tree”) when approached by an unfamiliar dog
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., “be still like a log”)
- Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult
- Immediately report to an adult any stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult

If bitten, wash immediately with soap and warm water and apply pressure to stop the bleeding. Contact your doctor for further care instructions and for information on reporting requirements in your community.

— continued on page 3 —
Mosquitoes and Ticks

Mosquito and tick bites itch. Plus, mosquitoes can transmit West Nile Virus and ticks can transmit Lyme disease. Both diseases can be quite dangerous for small children, elderly adults, and people with compromised immune systems.

To prevent bites:
- Cover up. Clothing is a good barrier for insects
- Use insect repellant when in an area prone to these pests
- Do not use insect repellants on infants
- Ask a pediatrician for advice on protecting infants and small children
- Prevent mosquitoes from laying eggs near your home by eliminating standing water in flower pots, tires, unused birdbaths, etc.
- Check nightly for ticks and remove immediately; it can take a while for a tick to transmit enough bacteria to cause infection and this simple step may prevent disease. These areas are especially popular for ticks:
  - Under the arms
  - In and around the ears
  - Back of the knees and between the legs
  - Around the waist and inside the belly button
  - In and around hair

If bitten:
- Mosquito bites can be treated with topical anti-itch cream and Benadryl
- Remove a tick by grasping it close to the head or mouth and pulling the whole thing gently straight out. Do not crush or “break” the tick. Kill it in a cotton swab soaked with rubbing alcohol, toss it in a fire, or flush it.
- Wash hands immediately after removing a tick. Clean the bite with rubbing alcohol.
- Watch tick or mosquito bite sites for unusual rashes or signs of infection.
- If the victim becomes ill within a few weeks of a bite, contact your doctor.

Snakes Bites

While rarer than dog bites, bee stings, or insect bites, snake bites can be just as—if not more—dangerous. Here are some basic guidelines for preventing and coping with snake bites.

To try to prevent snake bites:
- Encourage children not to pickup or play with garden or forest snakes.
- Avoid provoking a snake; if you cross paths with a snake, leave it alone
- Wear long pants or boots when hiking or working in tall grass
- Stay away from snake-infected areas at dusk and nighttime
- Be careful when handling rocks, logs, and other good hiding spots for snakes
- If you encounter a snake, do not run or move; snakes generally attack moving objects

If bitten:
- Remain calm; do not run
- Do not apply ice
- Do not remove venom; never suck or suction the wound
- Do not take medication to relieve pain
- Seek medical attention immediately

If a victim has been bitten by a snake not believed to be poisonous, but has any of these reactions, seek medical attention immediately: convulsions, dizziness, bloody discharge, sweating, swelling, numbness, fever, muscle weakness, fainting.

Sources: websites of the American Academy of Pediatric Physicians, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, WebMD, KidsHealth,
Opportunities


Registration is open for the Foster Family-based Treatment Association’s 25th Annual Conference on Treatment Foster Care. The conference will be held July 24-27 in Lake Buena Vista, FL. To learn more, visit http://www.ffta.org/conference/.

Yes, you CAN reprint articles from this newsletter. Please notify us of your plans, and on the article state the story is “Reprinted with permission from FosterParentCollege.com® Connections.” Email Lisa at press@northwestmedia.com.

Submit your nominations for Champions for Children. This regular column spotlights foster parents, advocates, social workers, foster care alumni, etc. Please email a sentence or two about your nominees, along with their contact information, to Lisa at press@northwestmedia.com. Thanks.

Carefree Cooking – Pizzadillas with Red Sauce

**Ingredients:**
- 4 whole wheat tortillas (8-inch size)
- ⅔ cup fresh or frozen spinach, finely chopped
- ⅔ cup part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 cup marinara sauce (store-bought or homemade)
- Olive oil

**Directions:**
1. Heat a 10-inch skillet on medium.
2. Arrange half the spinach and half the cheese on one tortilla.
3. Place a second tortilla on top of the spinach and cheese.
4. Spread a thin layer of oil in the pan and then place the first pizzadilla in the pan.
5. Cook for 2 minutes, or until the bottom tortilla is lightly browned and the filling is beginning to melt.
6. Turn the pizzadilla. Try using two spatulas (one on bottom, one on top) to quickly lift and turn the pizzadilla without losing the filling. Cook 1-2 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, heat the marinara sauce in a small saucepan or the microwave until warm but not hot.
8. Remove the pizzadilla from the pan, cut in half, and keep warm while you repeat the process for the second one.
9. Cut each pizzadilla in half.
10. Serve with the warm marinara sauce as a dipping sauce.

**Optional additions or substitutions:**
- Grated carrots, Grated summer squash

*Serves 2-4.
Each ¼ pizzadilla contains 170 calories.

From Nemours’ KidsHealth.org
June Word Find Fun — Hang this page on your fridge for your children’s enjoyment.

It’s SUMMER! These words all have to do with fun summer games, toys and activities. Have fun!

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

Word Key:
▶ Swim  
▶ Frisbee  
▶ Baseball  
▶ Skateboard  
▶ Bicycle  
▶ Tag  
▶ Books  
▶ Hula hoop  
▶ Sprinkler  
▶ Crafts  
▶ Garden

Kids Krafts — Aboriginal Clap Sticks

Australian aborigines clap decorated sticks together during ceremonial dances. You can make your own clap sticks with paint stirrers, acrylic paint, and glue.

What You Will Need:
▶ 4 wooden paint stirrers  
▶ Acrylic paints  
▶ Paint brushes  
▶ Tacky glue or hot glue gun

How you make them:
1. Glue sticks together in pairs. You might need an adult to help you with this. Make sure the sticks are even and straight. Let the glue dry completely before moving on to step 2.
2. Once the glue is dry, paint one side of each clapping stick. Let dry as long as the paint container labels recommend.
3. Turn over and paint the other side. Let dry.
4. Paint the edges. Let dry.
5. When the paint is completely dry, you can start clapping out tunes by tapping the flat parts of the sticks together, but be gentle or you might chip the paint.

Idea from FamilyFun.com