

# Fostering Communications

*Building a Network of People in the Foster Care System*

July 2015

Upcoming  
Conferences...

ND Children & Family  
Services Conference  
July 27-30, 2015  
Bismarck, ND

Register online  
by clicking  
[HERE](#)

Foster & Adoptive  
Parent Flings  
(mini-conferences)

Fargo  
October 2-3, 2015  
Minot  
October 16-17, 2015  
Bismarck  
April 15-16, 2016  
Grand Forks  
April 29-30, 2016



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Children and Family  
Services Training Center  
Department of Social Work  
University of North Dakota

## PRIDE Link

The PRIDE Model we follow highlights the competency of “*Working as a member of a professional team*”. Being part of a team within child welfare means supporting all efforts to provide children safe and nurturing homes. As foster parents, one is able to provide these basic, yet critical necessities by opening your home. It can be hard at times to support the plan for a child to leave your home to reunify with their parent(s) when anxiety takes over. Feeling anxious is understandable; however, one must put the child first. The following articles offers ideas on how to best handle these emotions and support a child with their family.

[Dealing with Reunification Anxiety](#)

[Learning to Let Go: Coping with Reunification Anxiety](#)

## Necessity of Sleep

In the book “Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child”, Dr. Marc Weissbluth quotes:

"Sleep is the power source that keeps your mind alert and calm. Every night and at every nap, sleep recharges the brain's battery. Sleeping well increases brainpower just as weight lifting builds stronger muscles, because sleeping well increases your attention span and allows you to be physically relaxed and mentally alert at the same time. Then you are at your personal best."

We understand the simple notion of sleep can be a major hurdle for some children to conquer when being placed into foster care. Whether it is an inability to sleep or simple refusal to close ones' eyes, without this essential basic need being met the day to follow is sure to be hard on everyone involved. Children placed into foster care may require us to think “outside of the box” when it comes to bedtime routines, but before we can do so, we need to understand why sleeping can be such a hard task to complete. Adoptive mother of two, Tracy Dee Whitt offers her insight as to why foster and adopted children have sleep issues. She offers three simple reasons to why she feels children don't sleep well and have difficulty falling asleep in the following blog entry.

[Sleep Issues](#)

Mrs. Dee Whitt then wrote a follow-up blog with ideas on how to help your child fall asleep and remain asleep. She offers simple steps with a concrete plan on how she utilized these steps to help her own daughter with hope that this may help a child in your care.

[How to Help your Sleep](#)

## Sensory Meltdown

“Many people think the words ‘tantrum’ and ‘meltdown’ mean the same thing. And they can look very similar when you see a child in the middle of having one. But for kids who have sensory processing issues or who lack self-control, a meltdown is very different from a tantrum. Knowing the differences can help you learn how to respond in a way that better supports your child”. [Difference in Tantrums and Sensory Meltdowns](#)

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Comments should be directed to the Training Center.*

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ONE....



One tree can start a forest;  
One smile can begin a  
friendship;  
One hand can lift a soul;  
One word can frame a  
goal;  
One candle can wipe out  
darkness;  
One laugh can conquer  
gloom;  
One hope can raise your  
spirits;  
One touch can show you  
care;  
One life can make the  
difference;  
**Be that ONE today!!**

~Author unknown



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## “Inside Out”

The new Pixar movie “*Inside Out*” is about an 11 year old girl, Riley, who moves from Minnesota to San Francisco with her parents. This movie is different in the sense that Riley and her family are not the leading characters, instead Riley’s primary emotions (Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, and Disgust) take over. The concept of this movie came from the work of psychologist Paul Eckman. This movie offers a number of valuable lessons that could be excellent for youth in foster care, including the powerful message that all emotions are important. The movie shows in a kid-friendly manner that each emotion serves an important function and we cannot selectively feel some and not others. It shows how if we push away sadness, we in turn close out joy. The movie does a wonderful job of encouraging each of us to openly express all of our emotions, including sadness, no matter how painful it may be sometimes. These are all critical pieces that our youth in care need to be reminded of as they process the loss of being removed from their parents and life as they knew it; hence why it is a must see for any age in foster care!!! The following article does a great job of connecting the concepts of the movie to the every day life of a youth in care.

[Psychology in “Inside Out”](#)

Another article written in regards to “*Inside Out*” highlights four of the movie’s “main insights into our emotional lives, along with some of the research that backs them up”. This article is simple, yet offers great ideas for how to pass these critical lessons onto the children in our care.

[4 Lessons to Discuss with Kids](#)

## Back to School

Hard to believe school is around the corner, but it is, so we need to start laying the groundwork for the school year ahead. This can be a more difficult transition for youth that are in foster care. It may mean starting a new school or going back to the same school after being removed from their parents this summer. All of these transitions need to be approached with care and planning in hopes of decreasing the traumatic effects. The following article offers some advice for you as a foster parent.

[10 Tips for Back to School Transition](#)

Another crucial piece to remember is that your child’s teacher may not have the necessary understanding of childhood trauma. The following link is one we encourage you share with your child’s educational team as it offers great insight into the psychological and behavioral impact of trauma.

[Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators](#)

## Scholarship

The ND Foster and Adoptive Parent Association has funds for scholarships for young people who are or have been foster children in North Dakota and have plans to attend a post-high school academic or vocational school during the upcoming school term. There are two scholarships of up to \$1000 available annually. The board of directors have worked to make the application and selection process more formalized. They have a short page of guidelines and a two page application that can be sent to you upon request. Please contact either Vice President Barb Reed ([breed@nd.gov](mailto:breed@nd.gov)) or President Jim Hooge ([jim42hooge@gmail.com](mailto:jim42hooge@gmail.com)) to obtain the application or if you have any further questions. The Association has requested that all applications be submitted by 09/15/15.

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## North Dakota Foster & Adoptive Association News...

If you would like to join the Association or learn more, feel free to contact Jim at: [jim43hooge@gmail.com](mailto:jim43hooge@gmail.com)



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## “Six Black Cats and a Red Hen”

**By: Jim Hooge, President of the North Dakota Foster and Adoptive Association**

We have a free-range chicken. One chicken. The hen was part of a group our family raised from little chicks a number of years ago. Our purpose was to have a source of home grown eggs. At some point several of the chickens moved out of the chicken house and fence onto the main yard. I don't recall if it was a jail breakout, or if there was a declaration of independence, and the chickens just voted to gain more space and we opened the gate. Whatever the process, these full grown red hens had the whole of our farm yard to wander and forage for food and shelter. They did remarkably well, finding a mixture of grain spills, insects, and other sources of food. At the beginning, I believe that they usually returned to the chicken house to roost safely at night. After a while, they began to roost in lower branches of trees on our farm yard. They were wary of farm dogs that would try to retrieve them, sometimes being carried to the lawn in front of the house, not killed, but like a trophy or prize. After these episodes the chickens would quietly sneak off until they were in the relative safety of the trees. These same trees would also protect the chickens from migrating eagles or local predator birds that might make an attempt at domesticated food sources.

We also have a black cat. We have a couple of other farm cats as well, but the black one is part of a family of six black cats we had a few years ago. The life of animals on the farm is likely different than that in places populated with more people. Our family has often not given personal names to these various farm dwellers. The cats will all respond to the name “Kitty, Kitty, kitty...,” knowing that there is probably a reward of table scraps, or a trapped mouse to gain if they rapidly approach the human making that sound. Otherwise these cats also spend their days looking for wild sources of food like small birds or rodents that live in the area.

The one regular food allowance we make for the various farm animals is to have a large wooden self feeder available in one of the open buildings. This box will hold the contents of a 50 pound bag of dry dog food. It is actually available to all of the farm's animal residents, including some wild creatures like skunks or raccoons if they can sneak past the self appointed sentries (the dogs). This past fall we discovered a couple of eggs in the yard. Testing indicated that the eggs were relatively fresh and good enough for human consumption, so they provided for part of a Sunday morning breakfast. We therefore know that the hen is attempting to be productive for us. I think that the dogs have usually found the eggs and that is probably why the dogs have protected the last remaining chicken from coyotes and other scavengers.

I expect that every so often in this story, the reader has come up with a lesson or moral that might be drawn for life. I have a few as well, but there is not one clear point that I want to make. I suggest that the reader do what you want, but at least enjoy the story. If you come up with a good lesson, please let me know. I would love to hear it.

We are nearing the time of the year for recognizing important events and milestones in our work. The Association is again inviting nominations for Foster Parent of the Year, Social Worker of the Year, and Agency of the Year. Please send the name, contact information for them and a description of the reason for the nomination to my email and I will send it on to the awards committee. The more information included with the nomination, the better it is for the committee to review. I will not say “easier” for the committee, since this is a challenging responsibility, and can be difficult to choose. Thank you for your participation in this.

We also need to hold elections for North Dakota Foster and Adoptive Parent Association board members. We have not determined what that process will be since previously we have held the elections at the annual meeting during the fall conference. We will get that information out soon.

Though we don't have a statewide meeting this year, we will be having various regional trainings and I hope that I and other members of the Association board will be able to be in attendance.

Finally, my book recommendation this time is “No Bad Kids” by Janet Lansbury, published by JLML Press. This book is geared for ‘toddler discipline without shame’ and though the children in the illustration stories are usually aged 1 to 3 or 4, I have found this to have some useful ideas when used with children who may well have missed a lot in relationships and learning during those years. Just this past weekend, I used one of the points in a conversation with a 16 year old.

Do Well ~Jim