

Foster Care Navigator Newsletter

Happy Packs: Enhancing the Child-Parent Visit

To help make parent-child visits more meaningful, foster parents can provide a backpack or bag that the child can use to share special things that have happened since their last visit with their parents. Between visits, the child can be encouraged to put things into the Happy Pack that he or she is excited to share with their parents.



Examples of what might be in a pack:

- A favorite notebook.
- A note that captures something cute or funny that the child said/did.
- New words the child is saying, if it's a younger child.
- A picture the child drew or colored.
- A note from the child's teacher.
- An assignment the child is proud of.
- A snapshot of the child doing a favorite activity.
- A letter the child wrote to his/her parents.

Whenever something comes up that children may want to share with their parents, encourage them to put it in their Happy Pack. This gives parents a place to start their visits – it lets them know what their child has been doing since the last visit. It also allows parents to feel more involved in their child's life, and the child will be very proud and excited to share their Happy Pack!

— Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association, 2012.

Foster Care Navigator

Volume 3 , Issue 2

July, 2017

Summer Fun Facts:

- In the United States, over 650 million long-distance summer trips are made.
- The "dog days of summer" refer to the weeks between July 3 and August 11 and are named after the Dog Star (Sirius) in the Canis Major constellation.
- July is National Ice Cream Month, not surprisingly. Americans eat an average 20 quarts of ice cream a year. Vanilla is the most popular flavor, with chocolate coming in a distant second.

Age Appropriate Chores – adapted from flandersfamily.info, 2013

It's Summer – and that means kids are home from school! Use this opportunity to teach some responsibility and get the kids involved with these age appropriate chores.

Ages 2-3 Years Old:

- ~Put toys away
- ~Fill pet food bowl
- ~Pile books and magazines
- ~Clothes in hampers

Ages 4-5 Years Old:

- ~Make beds
- ~Empty wastebaskets
- ~Water Flowers
- ~Wash plastic dishes

Ages 6-7 Years Old:

- ~Sort laundry
- ~Sweep floors
- ~Set/Clear table
- ~Rake leaves



Ages 8-9 Years Old:

- ~Load dishwasher
- ~Vacuum
- ~Put away own laundry
- ~Mop floor

Ages 10 and older:

- ~Unload dishwasher
- ~Clean laundry
- ~Wash windows
- ~Change bed sheets

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Meet Our Staff...

Kristie Vergowven, Foster Care Navigator

Foster Care Navigator, Kristie Vergowven, is passionate about children and their happiness. She and her husband are parents to a son who was in the foster system for 18 months. Recently Kristie and her husband celebrated the adoption of their son. As a foster parent, Kristie works closely with her local MDHHS office, and is anxious to help other families have the happy outcome that she has had. Kristie feels going through the process herself has prepared her to help others navigate the system and to have a smooth and enjoyable licensing experience. She is excited to provide support and assistance to prospective foster parents in finding answers to any questions they may have. Kristie has been described as, "Really easy to work with," and "Very flexible." She understands MDHHS policy, is kind hearted and willing to go the extra mile. Kristie has worked well with staff, relatives, birth parents and the court. In her spare time, she enjoys cooking, gardening and traveling to see her family.



Foster Care Navigator's Host 3rd Annual We Are Foster Parents Campaign

The Foster Care Navigators recently concluded their 3rd Annual "We are Foster Parents Campaign" which allowed Licensing Staff throughout the state to nominate foster parents for recognition of their efforts to provide safe, stable and loving homes to children in foster care.

The FCNP received 52 nominations of families across the state. All 52 nominated families were recognized for their dedication to foster care and were able to receive items of appreciation ranging from basketball hoops, swing sets, zoo tickets and hotel/waterpark passes.

The Foster Care Navigator Program featured 31 families throughout the month of May on their Facebook, Twitter and website. Featured families can be found on our website by following the "meet all 31 nominated families" link located on the home page at www.fcnp.org

The Foster Care Navigators would like to thank everyone who participated in making this year's campaign successful.



Follow the Foster Care Navigators Program on Twitter! See links to trainings, press releases and special upcoming events!

twitter.com/FCNavigators



"Like" us on Facebook! See daily featured camps, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events and various statewide trainings!

www.facebook.com/fostercarenavigatorprogram

Support Groups: Why So Important?

Support groups can help you:

- Form relationships with others who understand your home situation.
- Bond with others in your area who can help provide guidance and support.
- Gain access to resources that may have been unknown.
- Learn about others' experiences that may relate to your home.
- Allow for the opportunity to openly share amongst those who will understand.
- Make new friends!!!!



A List of Foster Care Support Groups by county are listed on the Foster Care Navigator website. Support groups can be found by going to www.fcnp.org and clicking on the "Resources" tab and then on the "Support Groups for Foster Parents" tab.



Foster Care Navigator Program

The Foster Care Navigator Program is designed to assist you in becoming a licensed foster parent in Michigan. If you are considering starting, or are currently going through the licensing process, please visit the Foster Care Navigator website at www.FCNP.org. On this site, you will be able to find an agency near you, orientation and PRIDE training dates, and other resources such as, how to apply for day care assistance and WIC. It is also important to get connected with other foster parents in your community. This program can help you identify support groups in your area, so that you can become a part of a group of foster parents offering support and guidance.

If you love kids and have a big heart, kids in foster care need you, please call: 855-MICKIDS.

www.FCNP.org

855-MICKIDS

