Welcome New Child Providers:

March 2017
- Kelsey Reeves & Alex DeWolf, Cottage Grove (Non-Kin)
- Katie Skipon, Forest Lake (Kin)

April 2017
- Amanda & Miguel Acevedo, Oakdale (Kin)
- Elizabeth & Richard Jones, Woodbury (Kin)
- Monica Minick, Woodbury (Kin)
- Teresa Warolin, Oakdale (Non-Kin)

May 2017
- Charlotte & Cory Ascheman, Hugo (Non-Kin)
- Michelle & Richard Ritzer, Stillwater (Kin)

Training Requirements Reminder

The State of Minnesota provides mandated requirements which are needed to hold your license to provide child foster care. One of the requirements is obtaining ongoing training relevant to the care of children. When your licensing social worker visits you each year, they will be making sure you are in compliance with the rules. Keep these requirements in mind each year:

- Every year, each person on the foster care license needs 12 hours of training, even though you can have a license for 2 years.
- Every year, 1 hour of the 12 should be on a topic related to Children’s Mental Health.
- Every year, 1 hour should be on the topic of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). During the first year of licensure, this requirement is in addition to the 12 hours, which means you will need to complete a total of 13 hours of training within your first year of licensure. After the first year of licensure, training on FASD may be included as part of the 12 hours of annual training.
- If you take children aged 9 and under – you need to take the Car Seat training every 5 years. If you have a spouse who is not on the license, he/she will also need this training.
- If you take children aged 5 and under – you need to take the SUID/AHT training every 5 years. If you have a spouse who is not on the license, he/she will also need this training.

When it is time for your annual visit, your licensing social worker will often come a couple of months before the license is due. Your training must be completed within the licensing year. At your visit, if training hours are missing, your licensing worker will remind you to complete the training before the license expires. If the training is not completed in that time, a correction order will be issued with a due date to return to rule compliance. If you have any questions regarding this, please contact your licensing worker.

Child Foster Care Licensor Retiring

Dear Providers:

I have been fortunate in my life to have met many special people. I must say, that includes the wonderful foster parents I have had the opportunity to work with. I would like to let you know as of December 15, 2017, I will be retired from Washington County. For those providing care for a non-kin, a new licensor will be assigned to you. Thank you for the wonderful work you do for the children and families of Washington County and the opportunity I had to get to know you and your families.

The best to you,
Ann Maudal

New Child Foster Care Licensor

Hi, my name is John Lukach and I am a new child foster care licensor at Washington County. I earned my Masters of Social Work degree from the University of Minnesota. Prior to joining the team at Washington County, I worked as an adoption recruiter finding permanent families for children in foster care. In my spare time, you’ll find me practicing yoga or playing with my two adorable cats named Foster and Chloe. I look forward to working with our foster care providers!
**Foster Parents Needed!**

Word of mouth is one of the best forms of recruitment to get new foster parents in Washington County. If anyone has said to you, “I’ve always thought about becoming a foster parent” or you know of someone who is good with kids, wants to help the community, and you think has what it takes to become a foster parent, please send them our way!

We need people who can provide care to a variety of youth, such as teens, sibling groups, children with mental health diagnoses, developmental disabilities, and everything in between.

We need foster parents in all areas of the county. Whether families can only commit to one or two weekends per month for respite care or be a placement resource, we have a need for both!

Please pass the word on so we can keep kids in our local foster homes.

**OUR NEXT CHILD FOSTER CARE INFORMATIONAL MEETING:**

Mon., January 8
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Government Center
14949 62nd St. N.
Stillwater

For more information call 651-430-6455.

Thanks so much!

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**MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS PLANNING KIT**

When a child is at risk of hurting themselves or others and/or the parent isn’t able to resolve the situation with the skills and resources available, it is a mental health crisis. A trigger for a crisis can be environmental, home, school, or others.

Sometimes there may be warning signs of a crisis. These may be displayed as an inability to cope with daily tasks, rapid mood swings, increased agitation, abusive behavior, loss of touch with reality, isolation, or unexplained physical symptoms.

NAMI Minnesota has published a Mental Health Crisis Planning for Children booklet that can help you learn to recognize, manage, prevent, and plan for a child’s mental health crisis. This free booklet is available for download at [www.namihelps.org/publications.html](http://www.namihelps.org/publications.html) under the heading of “NAMI Booklets – Youth,” scroll down to “Mental Health Crisis Planning for Children.”

Washington County also has a 24-hour mental health crisis phone line staffed by trained workers. The crisis number to use between 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, is 651-637-0757. The evening number to use is 651-290-8605.

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**FIRE EXTINGUISHER RECALL**

Two styles of Kidde disposable fire extinguishers have been recalled due to failure to discharge and the nozzle becoming detached. The affected fire extinguishers can become clogged or require excessive force to discharge.

The recall involves only models with plastic handles or push buttons. It does not include units with metal handles/valve assemblies. The recall involves 134 models of Kidde fire extinguishers manufactured between Jan. 1, 1973 and Aug. 15, 2017, including models that were previously recalled in March 2009 and February 2015.

To help identify affected models and view instructions on how to replace recalled units, visit: [https://inmarmarketaction.com/kidde/Kidde284US](https://inmarmarketaction.com/kidde/Kidde284US). If the fire extinguisher in your home is one of the affected models, please replace it.

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**REMEMBER ABOUT FIRST AID SUPPLIES**

All foster homes must be equipped with first aid supplies that are easily accessible in your home. You can buy a first aid kit or assemble your own. Here are some suggestions of items to include: Band-Aids (variety of sizes), roller bandages, sterile compresses, cold pack, gloves, scissors, thermometer, tweezers, antibiotic ointment. Remember to regularly restock your first aid supplies, and check any ointments or creams for expiration. Make sure all household members know where to access first aid supplies in your home. Your licensor will check for first aid supplies during relicensing and alternate year visits.
WASHINGTON COUNTY TRAININGS

All trainings will be held at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater unless otherwise noted. To register for trainings contact Katie Olsen at 651-430-6646 or katie.olsen@co.washington.mn.us. All trainings are free to Washington County Foster Care Providers unless otherwise noted.

*Reimbursement Reminder: Foster parents can seek up to $100 reimbursement per calendar year per household.

*Training Reminder: 12 hours of training is required yearly. One hour needs to be mental health related.

Supporting Children Exposed to Domestic Violence Training

This is a three-hour training on the dynamics of and the impact of exposure to Domestic Violence (DV) on children and strategies for supporting children who have been exposed to DV. The training describes some of the specific needs of children exposed to domestic violence and how to respond effectively. It also promotes resiliency in children who have been exposed to domestic violence and supports the development of their positive coping strategies.

Date/Time: Thurs., January 18, 2018 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Trainer: Dept. of Human Services Contracted Trainers

Family Reunification Through Visitation Training

Participants will learn about their role in supporting children/youth and the birth parent/caregiver as they move toward reunification/permanency. Participants will learn best-practice visiting methods focusing on strengths based, empowering, and collaborative visitation strategies. Participants will also have a greater understanding of the benefits of father's visitation.

Date/Time: Thurs., February 22 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.
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FIRST AID TUTORIALS

Training content includes recommendations to reduce Sudden, Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUID) including SIDS, suffocation, and other sleep related infant deaths; safe sleep environment; symptoms and consequences of abusive head trauma, risk factors for abusive head trauma; strategies to use when stressed, angry or frustrated.

Date/Time: Wed., January 10 • 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Location: Forest Lake YMCA, Forest Lake
Cost: FREE
Registration: Register by January 3.
www.developtoolmn.org/app/EventDetail.aspx?EVID=262173

CPR - Infant and Child

Designed for care providers, teachers, parents, and others who care for children, this course teaches participants how to recognize and care for breathing and cardiac emergencies in infants and children.

Date/Time: Sat., January 13 • 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Location: Best Western Premier Nicolle Inn, Burnsville
Cost: $33 - $38
Registration: Register by January 6.
www.developtoolmn.org/app/EventDetail.aspx?EVID=261656

First Aid - Pediatric

This course will help you recognize and deal with emergencies, injuries, and sudden illnesses in your child care setting. Class covers basic first aid principles and practices, injury prevention, and safety information.

Date/Time: Sat., January 13 • 12:30-3:30 p.m.
Location: Best Western Premier Nicolle Inn, Burnsville
Cost: $33 - $38
Registration: Register by January 6.
www.developtoolmn.org/app/EventDetail.aspx?EVID=261655

Behaviors That Won’t Go Away: Pushing Past Diagnosis Into Life Skills

This workshop is a daylong intensive training for parents or caregivers who live with and work with a child who has attachment challenges. It goes beyond looking at the diagnosis of Reactive Attachment Disorder and explores developmental trauma, the impact of early deprivation and maltreatment, and what the disturbance of social and emotional engagement disorder means. Trainers are Deena McMahon and Krista Nelson.

Date/Time: Fri., January 19 • 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Location: Gloria Dei Lutheran, 700 Snelling Ave., St. Paul
Cost: $85 per person/$150 per parenting couple
Registration: www.mnadopt.org/eventregister/?event_ID=1543

TRANSITIONS

Transitions

Learn how to help your teen or young adult access resources to succeed in school, employment, and independent living. Understand the rights young adults gain when they reach 18 and how to help guide them if they are not ready for total independence. This is a two-hour class and is for parents or caregivers of youth or young adults. Sponsored by NAMI Minnesota.

Date/Time: Thurs., January 25 • 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Location: Eagan Community Center, Eagan
Cost: FREE
Registration: www.eventbrite.com/e/transitions-eagan-registration-3660714183
A RADICALLY DIFFERENT WAY TO RESPOND WHEN YOUR CHILD IS AGGRESSIVE

The meticulously created Lego creation smashes against the wall and shatters into a hundred pieces.

“That’s enough!” You yell, hoping to diffuse the situation.

He screams back, picking up another handful of Legos.

“What has gotten into you? We don’t throw toys in this house!”

Your response only seems to fuel the fire.

Trying a different tactic, you switch to empathy, “You seem angry.”

“I’m not angry!” He screams back.

What?!

If he’s not angry, you don’t know what other emotion would fit.

You’re tired of this behavior. Over the past few months, these angry fits have been increasing. No amount of timeouts, punishment, or consequences seem to make a difference.

Maybe it’s time for a radically different approach.

The “I’m a bad kid” cycle.

If you’re ready to address this behavior from a new perspective, you’re going to have to look beyond the flying Legos.

Let’s imagine, just for a moment, that your child wants to do well. He wants to make good choices. He wants to be connected to you.

But sometimes, he enters the “I’m a bad kid cycle.”

Here’s how it works:

Your child feels a big emotion – maybe anger, frustration, anxiety, or disappointment.

He has no idea how to handle this big feeling, so he just reacts – throwing things, slamming doors, hitting his sibling.

Immediately after he engages in these behaviors, he feels horrible. Terrible. Maybe even shocked. The first thought that crosses his mind is, “I’m a bad kid.”

Since you’re nearby, you respond to the behavior: yelling, giving a consequence, repeating the house rules.

Your response confirms his thought, “See, mom thinks I’m a bad kid too.”

The more often he tells himself this thought, the more he believes it. And, the more he believes it, the more often his behavior reflects it.

Fueled by shame.

Shame is the powerful force that keeps this cycle spinning.

Beyond “I’m a bad kid,” shame quietly whispers, “You’re not worthy of love.”

Suddenly your child is on the defense. They try to ignore the horrible feelings and minimize their actions so they appear lovable, contradicting the obvious by saying, “I didn’t hit my sister” or “I’m not angry.”

Some kids push you away, verbally or physically, “Get away from me! Can’t you see I messed up? I’m a bad kid. I don’t deserve love.”

These kids are stuck. They need your help.
Interrupting the cycle.
Most of the time, parents have no idea how much shame their child is experiencing.

Your child’s behavior seems to be a personal attack against you. It seems that your child is intentionally acting out to get their way, or that they know how to handle the situation better, but they are choosing not to.

And sometimes, you may be right.

But for a lot of kids, the behavior you see is a sign that they are stuck in the “I’m a bad kid cycle.”

What if, instead of trying to find the “perfect consequence” for your child’s behavior, you helped him escape this cycle? What if you gave him a way out?

Here are 5 Ways to Interrupt the “I’m a bad kid cycle.”

• **Work on your stuff:** It’s difficult to help your child break this cycle if you are stuck in your own shame. Take some time to look at your parenting triggers, find time for self-care, or create some positive mantras. Instead of criticizing your past mistakes, give yourself some grace. Find a community or support as you work to make changes.

• **Quiet the alarm:** When kids are aggressive or yelling, your natural response may be to match their intensity with your own (as if an alarm was going off in your head). Unfortunately, this response perpetuates the cycle. Instead, take a few breaths to calm your own emotions before you respond. Silence the alarm by reminding yourself that “this is not an emergency.”

• **Look past the behavior:** Many parents feel an urgency to punish or “teach a lesson” when their children act out. Smashing toys, stomping feet, and hitting siblings are signs that your child is dysregulated, or that they need new strategies to manage big feelings. Sometimes, it requires a little detective work on your part to understand what thoughts or feelings may be impacting their behavior.

• **Empathize with the struggle:** Put your child’s complex emotions into words, “That Lego creation wasn’t coming together as you hoped, was it? Your hands felt like throwing, and now you have to start all over. I bet you wish you didn’t throw it, huh? It’s not always easy to make good choices when we’re frustrated.” You don’t have to agree with their behavior to let them know you understand.

• **Set boundaries with compassion:** Creating a safe environment and setting firm limits is important, but it does not need to be done with harshness. Get below your child’s eye level, if possible. Offer a hug or comfort. Redirect hitting hands with gentleness rather than force. Use your calm confident presence to send the message, “This seems big and scary, but we can handle it. I am here with you.”

Why it works.
If you’re ready to help your child escape the “I’m a bad kid cycle” you need to be willing to connect on an emotional level before you correct the behavior.

This is not an easy step.

You may find yourself doing whatever it takes to stop the tantrum, silence the frustrated cries, and jump in and solve the problem so peace can return to your home.

But, here’s the thing – when you are willing to say, “I see you struggling AND I love you in this moment,” shame cannot survive.

Your child can escape the cycle!

Now, your child can learn to manage frustration, they can overcome anxiety and embrace imperfection because they know that they are worthy of love no matter what.

Maybe that’s not such a radically different approach after all.

Written by: Nicole Schwarz, MA, LMFT
Originally posted on Nicole’s website: https://imperfectfamilies.com

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**Foster Care Medical Checkups Schedule**

- **Monthly checkups from newborn to 6 months of age**
- **From 6 months to age 2 years checkups are every 3 months**
- **Checkups are twice a year after age 2**

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**Checkups assessments include:**

- Chronic medical needs
- School adaption/function
- Physical health and growth
- Relationships and adjustment
- Social-emotional health
- Immunizations
- Dental
- Hearing/Vision
- Nutrition

**Child and Teen Checkups**

651-430-6750

To ensure high quality health care, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends youth in foster care to schedule well-child visits twice as often as the current Child and Teen Checkups schedule. Different checkup components are completed at the additional visits because not every screening needs to be repeated. If a child is enrolled in Medical Assistance, insurance will cover the additional visits. In fact, if a clinical provider recommends increasing the frequency of visits, those appointments will also be covered by Medical Assistance.
The Benefits of Yoga

You’ve likely heard something about yoga in the past couple of years. Many local schools have incorporated it into the curriculum and it seems like a studio can be found around every corner. You can go to several classes and workshops and find that there are a wide variety of beliefs about what yoga is and what it should be. Behind all of the rhetoric is one simple truth: movement makes a real impact on our well-being. Instead of trying to devise a complex routine or relying on videos, there are very simple concepts that you can remember to begin incorporating yoga into life. Here are some things to keep in mind and suggested poses:

1. **Folding** – when we fold and send the brain below the heart, blood is able to return to the brain and help soothe feelings of overwhelm and anxiety. Remember to inhale as you come out of a fold to prevent light headedness.

   Example poses: Child’s pose, ragdoll, downward dog

2. **Twisting** – our core is associated with holding feelings of anger. Twisting lets us “wring out” those feelings and can lead to a sense of calm. The compression of a twist also nurtures our internal organs as old blood is pushed out and replaced with new.

   Example poses: Triangle, seated twist, prayer twist

3. **Expanding** – when we expand the body we exude confidence and are open to experience. These shapes can provide a surprising burst of energy. **Expansive poses are not a good idea for a child who is feeling anxious as it may leave them feeling even more vulnerable.**

   Example poses: Dancers pose, camel pose, bow pose

Remember that being calm may be a scary experience for the children you care for. If you find that yoga increases negative behaviors, take note but do not prevent the child from doing yoga again in the future. Sitting with a child through these new experiences allows their brain to rewire so that calm is okay. There is no “perfect” mixture of poses or even a specific length of time to do them for. When it comes down to it, moving our bodies in different ways provides benefits no matter what. Namaste!

John Lukach, Child Foster Care Licensor