



Welcome New Child Providers:

September 2018

- Carrie Weller & Dan Milligan
Newport (Kin)

October 2018

- Melissa & Sean Bailey
Cottage Grove (Non-Kin)
- Merry Graham
Woodbury (Kin)
- Ellen & Lee Johnson
Afton (Kin)
- Gloria & Ron Paul
Woodbury (Kin)
- Jean Prichard
Bayport (Kin)
- Genice & Victor Thompson
Woodbury (Kin)

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FOSTER CARE AND THE HOLIDAYS

Written by foster care expert, Dr. John DeGarmo, Director of The Foster Care Institute.
www.drjohndegarmofostercare.com. Reprinted with permission.

The stockings are hung, by the chimney with care, in hopes that...In hopes of what? For many children who have been placed into the foster care system, they have come from homes where there was no Christmas, there was no hope. They have come from families that did not celebrate a holiday. They have come from environments where there were no presents, no tree. They have come from homes where there was not holiday joy or love.

The holiday season is upon us. Christmas, Hanukah, New Years, Kwanzaa; these are times that can be extremely difficult for many foster children. During this time of holiday cheer, many foster children are faced with the realization that they will not be “home for the holidays,” so to speak, with their biological family members. When they wake up Christmas morning, and are surrounded by people who just may be strangers to them, strangers who are laughing and having fun, it can be a very difficult time for them, indeed. To be sure, it is a day that is a stark reminder to these children that they are not with their own family. It is during the holidays when families are supposed to be together, yet these children in care are not. They are not with their families, and they may not know when they will see them next.

Along with this, foster children also struggle with trying to remain loyal to their birth parents while enjoying the holiday season with their foster family. There are those moments when a child from foster care may feel guilty for experiencing joy and laughter with their foster family, they may feel that they are not only letting their birth mother or father down, they might even be betraying their birth parents and members of their biological family, causing even more grief, guilt, and anxiety within the child during this season of holiday joy. Indeed, this can be a very emotionally stressful time for all involved.

As one who has fostered many children, myself, during the holiday time, I have found that it is important to address these issues beforehand. Before Thanksgiving, before Christmas, before Hanukah, even before family members and friends come to visit, foster parents need to prepare their foster child ahead of time.

To begin with, foster parents can best help their foster child by spending some time and talking about the holiday. Perhaps the holiday being celebrated in their new home is one that their birth family never celebrated, or is a holiday that is unfamiliar with them. Let the foster child know how your family celebrates the holiday, what traditions your family celebrates, and include the child in it.

Ask your foster child about some of the traditions that his family had, and try to include some of them into your own home during the holiday. This will help him not only feel more comfortable in your own home during this time, but also remind him that he is important, and that his birth family is important, as well. Even if his traditions are ones that you do not celebrate in your own home, try to include some of his into your own holiday celebration, in some way and some fashion.

Far too many children have come to my own home and have never celebrated their birthday, have never sung a Christmas carol, have never opened up a present. Perhaps you have had similar experiences, as well. Sadly, this is not uncommon for children in foster care. It is important to keep in mind that many foster children may come from a home where they did not celebrate a particular season, nor have any traditions in their own home. What might be common in your own home may

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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 7
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Government Center
14949 62nd St. N.
Stillwater

For more information
call 651-430-8307.

Thanks so much!

Continued from Foster Care and The Holidays on page 1

be completely new and even strange to your foster child. This often includes religious meanings for the holiday you celebrate. Again, take time to discuss the meaning about your beliefs to your foster child beforehand.

More than likely, your foster child will have feelings of sadness and grief, as he is separated from his own family during this time of family celebration.

After all, he is separated from his family during a time that is supposed to be centered AROUND family. However much you provide for him, however much love you give to him, you are still not his family.

Like so many children in foster care, they want to go home, to live with their family members, despite the abuse and trauma they may have suffered from them, and despite all that you can and do offer and provide for him. Therefore, this time of holiday joy is especially difficult.

You can help him by allowing him to talk about his feelings during the holidays. Ask him how he is doing, and recognize that he may not be happy, nor enjoy this special time.

Look for signs of depression, sadness, and other emotions related to these. Allow him space to privately grieve, if he needs to, and be prepared if he reverts back to some behavior difficulties he had when he first arrived into your home. You may find that he becomes upset, rebellious, or complains a lot. Along with this, he may simply act younger than he is during this time. After all, he is trying to cope with not being with his own family during this time when families get together. These feelings and these actions are normal, and should be expected. You can also help your foster child by sending some cards and/or small gifts and presents to their own parents and birth family members. A card or small gift to his family members can provide hope and healing for both child and parent, and help spread some of the holiday cheer that is supposed to be shared with all.

Each family has that crazy old Aunt Ethel, loud and obnoxious Uncle Fred, and the ever hard of hearing and over whelming Grandma Lucy.

Your family is used to these relatives and their personalities, your child in foster care is not.

If you have family members visit your home, prepare your foster child for this beforehand. Let him know that the normal routine in your home may become a little "crazy" during this time, that it may become loud, and describe some of the "characters" from your own family that may be coming over to visit. Remind him of the importance of using good behavior and manners throughout this period. Along with this, remind your own family members that your foster child is a member of your family and should be treated as such.

Remind them that he is to be treated as a member of the family and not to judge him or his biological family members or fire questions at him. This also includes gift giving. If your own children should be receiving gifts from some of your family members, your foster child should, as well. Otherwise, your foster child is going to feel left out, and his sadness and grief will only increase.

Be prepared, though, for some in your family not to have presents and gifts for him. Have some extra ones already wrapped, and hidden away somewhere, ready to be brought out, just in case.

With a little preparation beforehand from you, this season of joy can be a wonderful time for your foster child, one that may last in his memory for a lifetime, as well as in your memory, too. After all, the gift of love is one that can be shared, not only during the holidays, but all year long.

For more information on this topic, check out the webinar, "The Holidays: A Time of Joy and Sadness," available for purchase from The Foster Care Institute: www.drjohndegarmofostercare.com/store/p80/Training_Webinar%3A_The_Holidays-A_Time_of_Joy_and_Sadness.html.



CHILD FOSTER CARE TRAINING

DISCLAIMER: In preparation of this newsletter, every effort has been made to offer the most current, correct, and clearly expressed information possible. Nevertheless, inadvertent errors in information may occur. For training information, please check the sponsor listing to be certain of all the details related to the training.

WASHINGTON COUNTY TRAININGS

All trainings will be held at the Washington County Government Center in Stillwater unless otherwise noted. To register for trainings contact Tammie Belland at 651-430-8307 or ComSvsCFCLicensing@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 training reimbursement per calendar year per household.

***Training Reminder:** 12 hours of training is required yearly, including 1 hour of Children's Mental Health and FASD Training.

The Puzzle of Attachment: Defining, Understanding, and Putting the Pieces Together

Attachment is one of the most primal and important developmental stages we go through as human beings. It can set the course for how we view relationships, trust, love, security, hope, and ourselves. This workshop will spend time covering the essential aspects of attachment, the biological science behind it, the developmental stages when it affects our children the most, the impacts of trauma, and strategies to rebuild and strengthen attachment issues. We will look at real world scenarios and introduce proven tools that parents and caregivers can learn and bring home to strengthen and heal the attachments in their home.

Date/Time: Tues., January 15 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Trainer: John Wolff, LMFT

CARS (Children and Restraint Systems) Training

This training is required when caring for kids 8 and younger and must be taken every 5 years. *Limited participants!* No walk-ins. *Anyone arriving more than 5 minutes late will need to attend a different session.*

Date/Time: Thurs., January 17 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Trainer: Washington County Public Health Staff

Children's Mental Health - Anxiety and Autism Training

This 3-hour training is divided into two parts, providing a 1.5 hour overview of both anxiety and autism. These diagnoses will be discussed in terms of main origins, symptoms, behaviors, treatment, interventions, and cultural considerations. This course meets the children's mental health annual training requirement for child foster care providers.

Date/Time: Thurs., February 28 • 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Trainer: DHS Training Staff

COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Mental Health & the LGBTQ Community

Date/Time: Mon, January 7 • 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Location: District 622 Education Center Board Rm., North St. Paul

Cost: FREE

Trainer: Power of Relationships Emotional Wellness

Registration: No preregistration necessary for the workshop.

Free child care is available, but you must pre-register with Diane at 651-748-6765.

Behaviors That Won't Go Away: Pushing Past Diagnoses into Life Skills

This workshop is a daylong intensive for parents or caregivers who live and work with a child who has attachment challenges. It goes beyond understanding diagnoses to exploring how to truly live with a child with developmental trauma, to live with the long-term impact of early deprivation and maltreatment, and what disturbances of social and emotional engagement disorders mean over time. How can parents truly stay mindful and build life skills for their child and themselves? Come and practice together.

Date/Time: Fri., January 11 • 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

(30 minute lunch - bring your own bag lunch)

Location: Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley

Cost: \$135/parenting couple

Trainers: Deena McMahon, MSW, LICSW and Krista Nelson, LICSW, LMFT

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1606>

In Touch Parenting: Coaching Children to Use Words for Feelings

Children who have been traumatized by abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse lack words for feelings. Without words, their behavior does the talking. Yes, behavior problems are a language, but it can seem like a foreign language to parents. The goals of this workshop on In Touch Parenting are to help foster and adoptive parents translate the hidden meaning of behavior problems; to identify ways to discover the mind-behind-the-behavior, that is, to figure out what thoughts, feelings, and motives the child has when acting certain ways; to teach the "In Touch stance", a way of approaching troubled children with empathy and curiosity; to suggest ways that encourage children to "use their words" instead of losing control or acting out; to help parents to encourage children to express their feelings and needs.

Date/Time: Sat., January 12 • 9:00 a.m.-Noon OR 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul

Cost: \$25/person; \$40/parenting couple

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1610>

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November 2018

- **Annie & Michael Granger**
White Bear Lake (Non-Kin)
- **Michelle MacKenzie & Chris Lavercomb**
Newport (Kin)
- **Gayle & Larry Putnam**
Woodbury (Non-Kin)
- **Sandy & Leonard Ruby**
Forest Lake (Non-Kin)
- **Haddi & James Trebisovsky**
Woodbury (Non-Kin)
- **Jennifer & Nathan Trygg**
Hugo (Non-Kin)
- **Soua Her & Yeng Xiong**
Oakdale (Non-Kin)

December 2018

- **Jamie & Nick Florin**
Cottage Grove (Kin)
- **Joy & Matthew Gilson**
Woodbury (Non-Kin)
- **Yvonne Hill**
Cottage Grove (Non-Kin)
- **Kim & Russell Payne**
Woodbury (Kin)



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Trauma 2.0: Taking a Closer Look

Date/Time: Mon., February 4 • 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Location: District 622 Education Center Board Rm., North St. Paul

Cost: FREE

Trainer: District 622's Trauma Training Team

Registration: No preregistration necessary for the workshop. Free child care is available, but you must pre-register with Diane at 651-748-6765.

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

TBRI training is a must for adoptive and foster parents, as well as professionals. The Trust-Based Parenting Series offers in-depth training for parents of children with trauma-based behaviors. The Trust-Based Relational Intervention® is a unique model created by developmental psychologists Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross, founders of the Institute of Child Development. Drs. Purvis and Cross coach families through real life, problem-solving scenarios. They demonstrate proven, practical skills and strategies for applying TBRI principles (Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting) to everyday life to build a stronger parent-child connection, which leads to better behavior. In this four-part series, you will get an overview of TBRI and then a deeper-dive into the three principles (Empowering, Connecting, and Correcting). You will learn how to lay the foundation for deep insight regarding the impact of a child's history on their long-term development. You will leave with an enhanced understanding about how to interpret behavior and how to respond appropriately.

Date/Time: 4-part series - Tuesdays: February 5, 12, 19, & 26 • 6:00-8:30 p.m.

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley

Cost: \$60/person; \$100/parenting couple

Trainer: Meagan Galbari, MA, LPCC

Registration: <https://education.mnadopt.org/v2/?c=event&id=1607>

WINTER CAR SAFETY

Originally posted on www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Winter-Car-Seat-Safety-Tips.aspx.

Winter is a tricky time for car seats. **As a general rule, bulky clothing, including winter coats and snowsuits, should not be worn underneath the harness of a car seat.** In a car crash, fluffy padding immediately flattens out from the force, leaving extra space under the harness. A child can then slip through the straps and be thrown from the seat.

These tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) will help parents strike that perfect balance between keeping little ones warm as well as safely buckled in their car seats.

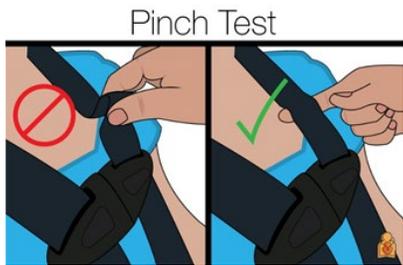
Note: The tips below are appropriate for all ages. In fact, wearing a puffy coat yourself with the seat belt is not a best practice because it adds space between your body and the seat belt.

- **Store the carrier portion of infant seats inside the house when not in use.** Keeping the seat at room temperature will reduce the loss of the child's body heat in the car.
- **Get an early start.** If you're planning to head out the door with your baby in tow on winter mornings, you need an early start. You have a lot to assemble, and your baby may not be the most cooperative. Plus, [driving in wintry conditions](#) will require you to slow down and be extra cautious.

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- **Dress your child in thin layers.** Start with close-fitting layers on the bottom, like tights, leggings, and long-sleeved bodysuits. Then add pants and a warmer top, like a sweater or thermal-knit shirt. Your child can wear a thin fleece jacket over the top. In very cold weather, long underwear is also a warm and safe layering option. As a general rule of thumb, infants should wear one more layer than adults. If you have a hat and a coat on, your infant will probably need a hat, coat, and blanket.
- **Don't forget hats, mittens, and socks or booties.** These help keep kids warm without interfering with car seat straps. If your child is a [thumb sucker](#), consider half-gloves with open fingers or keep an extra pair or two of mittens handy – once they get wet they'll make your child colder rather than warmer.
- **Tighten the straps of the car seat harness.** Even if your



child looks snugly bundled up in the car seat, multiple layers may make it difficult to tighten the harness enough. If you can pinch the straps of the car seat harness, then it needs to be tightened to fit snugly against your child's chest.

- **Use a coat or blanket over the straps.** You can add a blanket over the top of the harness straps or put your child's winter coat on backwards (over the buckled harness straps) after he or she is buckled up. Some parents prefer products such as poncho-style coats or jackets that zip down the sides so the back can flip forward over the harness. Keep in mind that the top layer should be removable so your baby doesn't get too hot after the car warms up.
- **Use a car seat cover ONLY if it does not have a layer under the baby.** Nothing should ever go underneath your child's body or between her body and the harness straps. Be sure to leave baby's face uncovered to avoid trapped air and re-breathing. Many retailers carry car seat bundling products that are not safe to use in a car seat. Just because it's on the shelf at the store does not mean it is safe!
- **Remember, if the item did not come with the car seat, it has not been crash tested and may interfere with the protection provided in a crash.** Never use sleeping bag inserts or other stroller accessories in the car seat.
- **Pack an emergency bag for your car.** Keep extra blankets, dry clothing, hats and gloves, and non-perishable snacks in your car in case of an [on-road emergency](#) or your child gets wet on a winter outing.

WINTER HOME SAFETY

Get out the shovels and snow blowers! With winter weather upon us, please remember to keep all exterior stairs and walkways of

your home free of ice and snow. *This is a home safety requirement and is grounds for a correction order if not followed.*

WINTER WEATHER APPAREL

If your foster child is in need of winter weather apparel, contact the child's case manager to discuss the possibility of a clothing

allowance or contact your licensor regarding donation options.

INTRODUCING THE COMFORT CALL

In 2019, Washington County will begin to implement a new practice called the comfort call. The purpose of this call is to create a foundation for developing relationships with birth parents during placement. We know from research that when a foster family is allied with the birth family it not only reduces stress, but significantly increases the chances that reunification will occur.

- Opens the door for birth and foster parents to ask questions that support the child during the difficult time of initial separation.
- This call is not meant to discuss the case plan or other technical details of the removal. It is simply meant to focus on how you as a foster parent can best meet the needs of the child.
- This call is not conducted in the presence of the child; its purpose is initiating partnership between the birth parents and foster parents.

Goals of the comfort call include:

- Occurs within the first 48 hours after the initial placement.
- The call is supported by your licensor or child protection worker who can help guide the conversation and/or intervene if necessary.

You will receive additional information from your licensor in the coming months. We will offer training and ongoing support to ensure you are just as comforted about this new practice!

SUPPLY BAGS FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Safe Haven Foster Shoppe is a non-profit organization that provides children in foster care with supply bags at the time of placement. Bags are age and gender-specific and can be customized for the specific needs of each child. At a minimum, bags include one outfit, pajamas, socks, underwear/diapers, blanket, toothbrush/toothpaste, hairbrush, shampoo/conditioner, body wash, a book, and a stuffed animal. Bags for infants include

items such as bottles and pacifiers, and bags for teens include items such as feminine products for girls.

When a child is placed in your home, please contact Anita Olson 763-742-7799 to request a placement bag. Safe Haven will personally deliver the bag to your home!



Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's Form

Sibling relationships are empowering and critically important for them over the course of a lifetime. These relationships are bonds and most often are the longest meaningful connections in life. For those who enter foster care, being supported by their siblings can promote safety, well-being and a sense of security. Sibling separation can cause long-term trauma that would likely interfere with future relationships that they try to build. For the welfare of children, where one sibling is removed from the home, or all are removed but in separate placements, their legal right is to remain connected and should not be limited. See [Minnesota Statutes 260.012 e \(4\)](#); [260C.212](#), subdivision 2(d); and 260C.008.

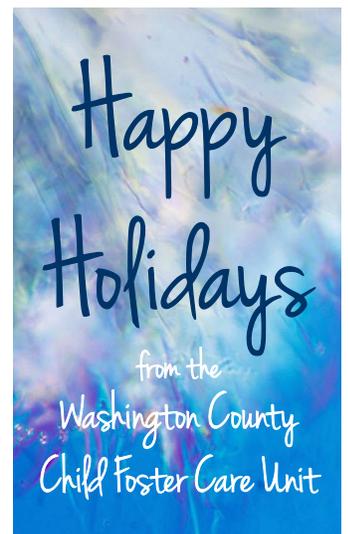
Siblings have a right to:

- Be placed with each other when possible to remain a family. Give adult siblings a chance to be a foster parent, adoptive parent, or gain custody over younger siblings to keep families together.
- Be placed in homes close by each other, if they cannot be placed together, to facilitate frequent and meaningful contact, including phone, internet, social media, FaceTime, skype, etc. Siblings will be provided with a phone number, email, and/or address, and access to updated photos by email or mail.
- Be actively involved in each other's lives if they choose. Share celebrations including birthdays; holidays; graduations and other school events; extracurricular activities; cultural customs, including speaking their native language; and other meaningful milestones.
- Be informed about changes in each other's placements, including being notified of discharge from placements, new placements, as well as discharge from foster care. Siblings will be allowed to maintain contact with other siblings who remain in care. Every effort should be made to ensure contact among siblings in care and those not in care.
- Predictable and regular visits that shall not be withheld as a behavioral consequence. Unless verifiable safety concerns exist, siblings should not be kept from each other. Visits can be monitored, but should not be supervised unless there is a safety risk. Youth, caregivers, caseworkers, and parents are all responsible for ensuring that siblings have contact. All parties will coordinate dates and times, transportation, and other accommodations to ensure contact occurs. This should be outlined in their service plan. Due to the normalcy provision, caseworkers do not need to give permission for visits or possible sleep overs, but foster parents should still communicate with and inform caseworkers that these activities are occurring. The judge should also be updated on sibling connections at every hearing.
- Be included in permanency planning decisions relative to siblings. They should know what expectations are for continued contact when a sibling is adopted or custody is transferred to a relative.

FOSTER CARE BILL OF RIGHTS

Sibling relationships are some of the most important relationships that a child will encounter while growing up. Unfortunately, children in foster care may not always be placed with their siblings due to safety concerns or a lack of space to keep them all together.

This past year, the state has acknowledged that this relationship is something to not only encourage but to protect. Effective immediately, the child's case manager will provide the Sibling Bill of Rights Commissioner's form (shown to the left) as needed. This will be reviewed with all siblings and foster providers will be asked to agree to the rights and sign.



FOSTER PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Washington County Licensing provides group sessions aimed at educating, shaping, and supporting each other as we all navigate the foster care experience together. Please consider joining us for these sessions so you can experience the support and community of Washington County Foster Care.

Dates	Last Tuesday of every month (<i>except August and December</i>)	
Times:	Even months: 6:00-7:30 p.m.	Odd months: 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Location:	Woodbury City Hall, Woodbury Birch Conference Room	Woodbury City Hall, Woodbury Ash Conference Room

If you have any questions, contact Tammie Belland at 651-430-8307 or ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us.

FAREWELL TO LICENSOR

With the new year comes a new change for me. I will be leaving my position with Washington County effective January 7, 2019. I have accepted a new position designing trainings for child protection staff and foster care providers. For those who I license, I will be in touch with you over the next month to let you know what this change will look like. For those that I have met through training or other events, I thank you for opening up

and sharing your experiences with me. And of course, I want to thank my wonderful colleagues who work hard every day to help keep children safe and cared for. I am so glad that I have had this opportunity to serve and I know you are all left in good hands.

Warmly,
John Lukach

AAP UPDATES RECOMMENDATIONS ON CAR SEATS FOR CHILDREN

In August the American Academy of Pediatrics updated their recommendations for car seat use. The change recommends that children remain in a rear-facing car seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Previously, the recommendation was until age 2 and the new recommendation removes the specific age milestone. When the child is rear-facing, the head, neck, and spine are all supported by the hard shell of the car seat allowing the seat to absorb most of the crash force. When children ride forward-facing, their bodies are restrained by the harness straps, but their heads are thrown forward possibly resulting in spine and head injuries.

- When children exceed the limits they should use a belt positioning booster seat until the vehicle’s lap and shoulder seat belt fit properly. This is often when they have reached at least 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 to 12 years old.
- All children younger than 13 should be restrained in the back seats of vehicles for optimal protection.

Source: America Academy of Pediatrics

Parents and providers should review the instruction manual and the label on the car seat to find the manufacturer’s weight and height limits. The AAP recommends:

License holders who care for foster children that are younger than 9 years old are **REQUIRED** to take a C.A.R.S. training every five years. These trainings are offered through Washington County several times per year. Visit our [website](#) for information. These classes are free of charge to child foster care providers, but the classes fill up quickly.

- Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat.
- Once they are facing forward, children should use a forward-facing car safety seat with a harness for as long as possible. Many seats accommodate children up to 65 pounds.

To ensure you remain in compliance with this rule, please sign up in advance, before your training expires. C.A.R.S. Training is also available statewide at other locations. You may sign up for a class that is closer to your home or at a more convenient time by using the www.developoolmn.org website, keyword: C.A.R.S.



HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS?

Please make sure to keep your licensor informed of any changes to your email address or home/cell phone numbers.

You may contact your licensor directly or email us at:
ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us

Washington County Child Foster Care Staff

Katie Olsen

Child Foster Care Licensor
651-430-6646
katie.olsen@co.washington.mn.us

Lisa Hofmann

Child Foster Care Licensor
651-430-4167
lisa.hofmann@co.washington.mn.us

John Lukach

Child Foster Care Licensor
651-430-6563
john.lukach@co.washington.mn.us

Jessica Lentz

Senior Child Foster Care Licensor
651-430-6485
jessica.lentz@co.washington.mn.us

Tammie Belland

Case Aide
651-430-8307
tamara.belland@co.washington.mn.us

Becky Motzko

Supervisor
651-430-6476
rebecca.motzko@co.washington.mn.us

Child Foster Care Email:
ComSvsCFCLicensing@co.washington.mn.us

Visit us on the Washington
County website at:
www.co.washington.mn.us/childfostercare

Licensing Unit's Mission

To enrich the lives
of children and adults
by promoting safe
and quality licensed care.

Washington County

Community Services
14949 62nd St. N.
P.O. Box 30
Stillwater, MN 55082
www.co.washington.mn.us

WINTER FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Winter is officially here! During our months of cold weather it's hard to stay motivated and healthy. Keeping kids minds and bodies healthy helps them de-stress the brain chemicals, provides a break from the daily routines, eases depression, and allows them to perform better academically. During the winter months we need to get creative. Here are some local winter activities to keep kids active. Don't forget a good old fashion snowball fight, building a snowman, or sledding is always fun and it burns off energy.

- Cross country skiing and snow shoeing at county parks: www.co.washington.mn.us/1362/Cross-Country-Skiing
 - In the past, snowshoe lessons and rentals hosted by a naturalist during winter at their Nordic Center at Lake Elmo.
- Downhill skiing and snowboarding at Afton Alps: www.aftonalps.com
- Ice fishing on the St. Croix River: www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/eastmetro/rivers/stcroixupper.html
- Snow tubing in Lake Elmo: www.greenacresrec.com
- Snowmobiling in Washington County: www.startrail.org
- Winter Ice Cream Social: www.stcroixsplash.org/event/winter-ice-cream-social
- Outdoor ice skating rinks in various communities:
 - www.woodburymn.gov/departments/parks_and_trails/outdoor_skating_rinks.php
 - www.cottagegovemn.gov/departments/parks_recreation/outdoor_skating_rinks.php
- Variety of community indoor activities:
 - <https://web2.vermontsystems.com/wbws/mnwoodburywt.wsc/splash.html>
 - www.cottagegovemn.gov/departments/parks_recreation/programs_events.php
- Free indoor events at Washington County Library: www.washcolib.org
- Salvation Army Coats for Kids: salvationarmynorth.org/2016/10/help-us-keep-kids-warm-this-winter



FIGHT FLU

The flu is a contagious viral disease that can be serious. Every year millions of people get sick, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized and thousands to tens of thousands of people die from the flu.

Everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine. It is the most important step in preventing the flu. Regular doctor checkups are a great time to get immunizations.



GET YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY VACCINATED!

Want help to find a clinic or dentist?
Need help with transportation to appointments or scheduling an interpreter?
Call Washington County Child and Teen Checkups at 651-430-6750.

Child and Teen Checkups 