



Families By Choice

Youthville's official newsletter for Resource Parents

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LIFEBOOKS

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Most children have a mother, father, grandparents or someone constant in their lives who can tell them about their childhood as they get older. They would tell them details like how cute they were, when they first began to walk, how they colored on the walls when they were three, how in fifth grade they won a prize for the school science fair, or in ninth grade they scored the winning basket in their first freshman basketball game. More importantly they can tell or show the child who they look like or acted like the most in their family. But for foster children, foster parents and social workers must pick up where family has left off. An important fact to remember is the birth parent(s) also miss out on important moments and daily activities while their children are in foster care. Anything we can document can help their parents stay connected with their children's lives during a time they are trying to reunite. If the foster care child should go to adoption it is a good place for adoptive parents to begin getting to know the child who will become a part of their forever family. Keeping an accurate record of these children's lives is important because often times kids are in more than one placement and with each move, they leave a little more of their childhood behind.

Basics for creating a Lifebook

Two vital things of importance when starting a Lifebook are photographs and good old fashion penmanship. Be as creative as you like using extras such as colored, patterned, or textured paper and various different embellishments on the market today. Remember that photographs and journaling the memories are the most important items

that need to be included in the pages of a Lifebook.

Pictures are a major part of documenting their past, but it is essential that we do not forget to put the details of the photograph into words:

- The date;
- How old the child is in the picture;
- Where the picture was taken;
- What they were doing or saying at the time.

Pictures are great but with the background of the photograph, the child's memories can tell the story of their life. Pictures can tell an entire story if we use them in the right ways. Getting the child's input is always a good thing too if you can get them involved. This makes the Lifebook even more special when they can add their own ideas, artwork, and memories. You can get a guideline for creating a Lifebook from your foster child's agency. Some page ideas from the Lifebook sample available from Youthville are All about me, My Heritage such as birth parent pages, All About Me such as school memories, People and Places, Foster family information and Important information such as medical and dental records.

Starting to work on the Lifebook is very simple. Start with the first day you have the child in your care. This can be a tool in getting to know the vulnerable child that has been placed in your home. create a page about them, who they are, their name, height, weight, hair color and style, general appearance, date of birth, etc. Then add fun details about the child's many interest!

Another easy way to start is to
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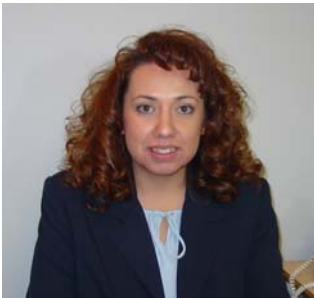
What would you like to see
in the newsletter?
Contact Dusty Buell at
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From the Desk of Sandra Gasca

As we approach another Fall season, it is a very special time at Youthville. Not only are we getting ready for the upcoming holidays, but November is a very special and exciting time.

November is nationally recognized as National Adoption Month. Youthville will be celebrating by holding Kansas' first ever National Adoption Day celebration on November 18th. National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to raise awareness of the 119,000 children in foster care waiting to find permanent, loving families.

National Adoption Day is celebrated every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. In 2005, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies and advocates in 45 states and the District of Columbia helped to finalize the adoptions of more than 3,300 children from foster care. Last year, 227 events were held throughout the country to finalize adoptions and to celebrate all



Sandra Gasca,
Chief Program
Officer Foster
Care and Contract

families who adopt.

This year we will be the 46th state to represent this national campaign and it is because of the quality of foster parents' and their efforts that we are able to help the children of Kansas achieve permanency. Speaking of permanency and adoptions, I want to take this opportunity to share with you a statistic that I found very interesting. When I looked at our adoptions for Youthville, I found that 69% of all

finalizations have been from resource parents where the child has already been placed. This proves once again how important, special, and selfless our resource parents are. It makes me so proud every time I see a child achieve his/her life plan, and you all are so instrumental in these achievements.

In closing, I just want to reiterate how thankful I am to all of you. I know that being a foster parent or an adoptive parent can

seem at times to be a thankless act, but just know that without individuals like you, these children wouldn't have the opportunity to grow up in a safe, loving environment. On National Adoption Day, we plan to have a balloon release to honor all of those children who have achieved permanency, so if you happen to see a cluster of green balloons, I would ask that you take a minute and reflect upon all of the good you do everyday, and as those balloons fly over head, keep the rest of those 119,000 children waiting to achieve permanency in your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Sandra Gasca

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make a picture of your own family and include it in the foster child's life book under important people. You are now considered this child's family and this will help them feel included and connected.

When you have time, work back toward the beginning of the child's life, to find as many details of their past as you can. Searching for these memories can be challenging but not impossible. Use the resources you have including case workers, the child's birth parents (if you have communication), their birth hospital, schools, and internet. The case worker involved in the case may have some information for you. For

example, my husband and I have adopted four children and our caseworker had found their footprints from the hospital where they were born. We do not have baby pictures of them but we do have these tiny foot prints which gave us as adoptive parents a link to an early date in their life.

Growing up without knowledge of your childhood can leave children aging out of the system to feel empty and lonely. Efforts to preserve some of their precious childhood memories can give children great pride in who they are and how far they have come in life. Taking the time to make simple Lifebooks of their past gives vulnerable children back some of their childhood.



Resource Parent Spotlight: The Hedrick Family



Troy and Karla Hedrick have been searching for their children for several years. They had each other, the love in their heart, and the strong desire to be parents. Even though they knew they were unable to have children of their own, it was never a question if they wanted a family.

Karla said, “We knew that there were children out there in need of a good home; therefore, we started the process of becoming foster parents.”

Their journey led them to Youthville and they took comfort in knowing they were on a mission to help children that could not help themselves.

“Youthville has been a wonderful agency to be associated with. We feel that [Youthville] always try and do what is best for the children. They were not only concerned for the children, but for us too, as the foster parents.”

Throughout a span of several years the Hedrick family has seen kids come and go, and they have also seen kids come and stay. Their first placement was two siblings and they had them for over two years. Fortunately, for these children they were able to be reunited with their biological family after the two years.

“When our first two girls went home it was an extremely bitter-sweet time. We were so happy for the family to be reunited, but it was a sad time for us. We really bonded with them and still feel like

they are a part of our family. Fortunately, we also developed a friendship with their parents and still get to see the girls once a month.”

Since then, the Hedrick home has not quieted down at all, now it has actually grown. Three young siblings have come into the Hedrick’s’ life, and Troy and Karla are in the final stages of adopting these children.

“These children are very bright and resilient. They have made our life much more fulfilled. It has been very rewarding to have children depend on us. To know that we have touched their lives and to know that they choose to love us is such a wonderful feeling.”

It is because of Troy and Karla that these children have a new and improved outlook on life.

“[Being a foster parent] is a rewarding experience. Knowing that you are able to touch a child’s life and hopefully make the world a better place for them. You can’t imagine the impact a positive, nurturing, and loving family can do for a child.”

Whether it is the children that get to start over with their biological family, or children that get a fresh start with a new family, the odds for these children to lead a more successful life have dramatically increased.

INHALANTS

Inhalants are breathable chemical products that can be inhaled to give the user a drug-like effect. This is commonly done by putting the substance into a plastic bag, holding the opening of the bag over the nose and mouth and taking breaths, a practice known as huffing. Teens may be misinformed about the dangers of inhalants. Using inhalants even once can kill.

WHAT ARE THE DANGERS?

At low doses the user may experience a feeling of stimulation or euphoria commonly associated with CNS stimulants, however at higher doses a user can lose consciousness. Huffing can cause many potential and life-threatening adverse effects including severe damage to the liver, kidneys, muscles, and brain.

Huffing can cause disturbances in the heart, causing the

users heart to beat out of rhythm or stop beating. Also, huffing spray inhalants can lead to suffocation by coating the lungs, making it impossible for oxygen to get through. Inhaling from a paper bag greatly increases the chance of suffocation.

SIGNS OF INHALANT USE:

- avoids contact with his/her family
- seems tired a lot
- is no longer reliable
- suddenly starts doing poorly at school or at work
- doesn’t seem to care how he or she looks
- gets sick a lot
- has sores or blisters

Stay Informed, Be Aware!

Training Calendar for October - February

OCT	TIME	TITLE	LOCATION
2	6:30-8:30p	Boundary Issues	Concordia
9	6:30-8:00p	Grief, Loss & Inducement	Wichita
9	7:00-9:00p	Networking	Colby
9	6:00-8:00p	Oppositional Defiant Disorder	Beloit
10	7:00-9:00p	Treatment Level Respite	Newton
10	6:30-8:30p	Bullies & Bullying	Garden City
12	6:30-8:30p	Human Growth & Development	Dodge City
16	6:30-8:00p	Dealing With Challenging Teens	Wichita
17	7:00-9:00p	Stress & Burn Out	Great Bend
19	6:30-8:00p	Childhood Trauma & Interventions	Wellington
23	7:00-9:00p	Grief & Loss	Phillipsburg
24	6:30-8:30p	Grief & The Holidays	Hutchinson
26	7:00-9:00p	Discipline	Pratt
NOV			
6	6:30-8:30p	Preventing & Managing Aggressive Behaviors	Concordia
9	6:30-8:30p	Discipline	Liberal
13	6:30-8:00p	Discipline Ideas	Wichita
13	6:30-8:30p	Teen/Preteen Substance Abuse	Colby
13	6:00-8:00p	Grief & The Holidays	Beloit
14	7:00-9:00p	Fostering the Sexually Abused Child	Newton
14	6:30-8:30p	Focus On Minding	Garden City
16	7:00-9:00p	Fostering A Child with Attachment Issues	Pratt
16	6:30-8:30p	Grief & The Holidays	Dodge City
20	6:30-8:00p	Blending Birth & Foster Children	Wichita
28	7:00-9:00p	Parenting Teenagers	Hutchinson
DEC			
4	6:30-8:30p	Lifebooks	Concordia
12	6:30-8:30p	PTSD	Garden City
JAN			
2	6:30-8:30p	Lying, Stealing & Bedwetting	Concordia
8	6:30-8:00p	Creative Discipline	Wichita
8	6:00-8:00p	Discipline	Beloit
8	7:00-9:00p		Colby
9	7:00-9:00p	Stress & Burnout	Newton
9	6:30-8:30p	Fostering A Child with ADHD	Garden City
11	6:30-8:30p		Liberal
16	7:00-9:00p	Brain Development	Great Bend
18	6:30-8:00p	Dealing With Challenging Teens	Wellington
22	6:30-8:00p	From Foster to Adopt	Wichita
22	7:00-9:00p	Bipolar Disorder in Children	Phillipsburg
23	6:30-8:30p	Boundary Issues Part I	Hutchinson
25	7:00-9:00p		Pratt
FEB			
5	6:30-8:30p	Anger Control	Concordia
8	6:30-8:30p		Liberal
12	6:30-8:00p	Role Changes	Wichita
12	7:00-9:00p		Colby
13	7:00-9:00p	Birth/ Resource Parent Relations	Newton
13	6:30-8:30p	Parenting Tips & Principles	Garden City
13	6:00-8:00p		Beloit
15	6:30-8:30p	Childhood Depression	Dodge City
19	6:30-8:00p	Welcome to Our Lives	Wichita
20	7:00-9:00p	Creative Discipline	Hays
27	6:30-8:30p	Boundary Issues Part 2	Hutchinson