

Foster Care Leaders

Sandra Gasca
Chief Child Welfare
Permanency Program &
Foster Care Officer

Patrice Claassen
Director of Foster Care
Greater Kansas Area

Denise Hunter-Mitchell
Director of Foster Care
Wichita & South Central

Luci Monares
Director of Licensing

We would like to thank
the following resource
homes for choosing us as
their child placement
agency:

Wichita

Donald Holland
& Michelle Myres
Frances "Sharyl" Minnis
Bruce and Brenda Bynum
Terrance & Tamara Clark
Christine Emerson
& Bonnie Kopp
Angela Gatschet
Ray & Nancy Humphrey
Sonya Manns
Eric & Candace Perry
Jeffrey & Damona Powell
David & Julie Requena
Christopher &
Paula Rodruquez
Roy Spencer & Trina Berry

South Central

Felix & Donna White
Scott & Tara Ayres
Matthew & Carrie Belshe
KaAnn Graham

Northwest

Duane & Kristine
Vollbracht

Northeast

Harrietta Harris
Carl & Leasha Litif
Clayton & Linda Bledsoe
Laurence & Michele Dillon
Dena Jo Koehn

North Central

Randy & Michaelle Choitz

Director's Letter

Sandra Gasca, Chief Child Welfare
Permanency Program & Foster Care Officer



Happy New Year!

It is hard to believe that the year 2009 is already upon us! This new year brings very exciting initiatives at Youthville. For starters, Youthville was notified that we were the successful bidder of the Foster Care/Reintegration/Adoption contract for Sedgwick County. This contract is a renewal of the current contract Youthville maintains and will be in effect for four more years. One of the changes that the state put in this new contract is that the Family Preservation provider (DCCCA for Sedgwick County) will no longer provide foster care, rather, when children need to be removed from their home, they will be referred to the Foster Care/Reintegration/Adoption provider. What this means is that approximately 275-300 children will be transferred to Youthville's case management from DCCCA on July 1. We are currently working with DCCCA to plan for case management transfer of responsibilities.

Other contract awardees throughout the state retained their regions with the exception of Region 3, which is the Topeka/Salina/Concordia area. TFI Family Services became the successful bidder in that region, which means that case management responsibilities will be changing as of July 1, 2009 from KVC Behavioral Health. Many of you in western Kansas have asked whether Youthville bid that region and we did indeed bid the region, but St. Francis Community Services maintained that area. More information regarding the contract changes will be provided through informational meetings that I will be setting up in your areas within the next couple of months.

More exciting news is that our Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program received full certification. This certification allows us to evaluate whether it is time to add a second team to serve more children through this program. Additionally, our licensing department has been working with KDHE around some of the regulations that have proven to be a barrier when the intent was to make getting licensed less cumbersome. We are planning on addressing some of these issues, among several others impacting foster children, in the upcoming legislative session.

There is no doubt that this new year will be another busy year. Even though things can get hectic, I purposefully pause to reflect about the core and meaning of the work that we do. The other day I ran across a quote by Maya Angelou that said: "We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt and plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance and seed humility. Exchange love for hate, thereby, making the present comfortable and the future promising." This quote reminded me of all the dedicated foster parents that are part of the Youthville family and how you take the broken and fragile hearts of children and help them learn to forgive and trust again. Because of you and your commitment to them, our children have a more comfortable present and a chance at promising futures. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,



Sandra Gasca
Chief Child Welfare Permanency Program & Foster Care Officer

Area updates

North Central Update

We would like to congratulate Crystal Ehlers on her new position. She has accepted the Recruitment Specialist role in the North Central area.

We would also like to highlight one of our extraordinary resource parents, Carol Stringer. She is such an inspiration and a guiding light for children! She had three siblings in her foster home and Youthville was able to find a wonderful adoptive home for these children. The adoptive parents and Carol have built a very close bond with each other and that bond has helped transition the kids into home. She continues to visit the children and even invites them to her home so as to give their parents a night out! What a blessing for her to be such a resource!

Mary Reed, LMSW

Southwest Update

Welcome to Bill Purdy, who began in November as the supervisor for the SW area. Bill brings extensive experience in child welfare and behavioral health/substance abuse services. He is looking forward to becoming acquainted with all the families in the Dodge City, Garden City and Liberal communities.

Congratulations to Lonnie and Michelle Lightner and to Paul and Mary Martinez, who were selected as Foster Parents of the Month for November and December, respectively. The Lightner family has demonstrated their willingness to promote fostering within their community and have provided much needed assistance with recruitment activities. The Martinez family is recognized for their willingness to accept challenging children into their homes and provide them with a safe, loving and stable environment. Both families are great team players with staff and other families in providing the best of care to children.

William Purdy, LMSW | Foster Care Supervisor

Wichita/Wellington Update

One of the most significant needs in child welfare is the lack of placements for teens. Wichita area specialized foster care worker, Heather Underkofler, works with several families who have provided care for teens over the past few years. "Mary West and Beverly Weis are both single ladies who have a particular interest in caring for teens," says Underkofler. She continues by saying, "Just in this past year between the two of them, they have served at least ten teens, teaching them the skills to be independent." Not only do Mary and Beverly provide long term care, they are always willing to take kids in an emergency situation. "One of the most joyful things I've experienced is watching Mary and Beverly's kids come back to their home for advice, a meal or just to feel the comfort of being in the home they knew," Underkofler said. Thank you to all the foster parents who have opened their homes to teens. If you are considering placement of teens or would like to learn more, please contact your foster care worker.

Stacey Winter, LCMFT | Foster Care Supervisor

Northwest Update

I would like to introduce Tiffany Antholz to the NWKS Foster Care team. She has joined the Colby area as the recruitment specialist. She is very familiar with foster care as she has family members that have been resource parents for Youthville for many years and has had many opportunities to interact with them over the years. This experience has inspired Tiffany to seek a career in the child welfare field. Her knowledge of the benefits and struggles of resource parenting will be invaluable as she recruits and trains new parents in the area. Welcome aboard Tiffany!

Amy M. Tuttle, LMSW | NWKS Supervisor

KDHE Regulation Update

KDHE revised their regulations in March 2008. Since the revisions were announced and implemented, there have been questions and need for clarification. KDHE has issued FAQ's in regards to the regulations. For more information on various regulations, please visit the KDHE web site: <http://www.kdheks.gov/bcclr/index.html> or visit with your foster care staff. Excerpts from the September 2008 FAQ's issued by KDHE:

Can locking the room where medications are stored meet the requirement for medications to be in locked storage? K.A.R. 28-4-818(a); p. 53 - 54. A locked closet for medication storage would be in compliance with the regulations; however, it would not be sufficient to lock a room that is used for other purposes (i.e. a bedroom).

What about a childproof lock? The answer to this question is dependent upon the ages and abilities of children living in the home and the ages for which a family foster home is licensed. Childproof locks would only be considered an appropriate locking device when none of the children living or placed in the home are capable of opening the lock.

If the locking device requires a key to unlock it, where should the key be kept? The key should be kept in the licensee's control. There are a variety of ways to meet that requirement and the best place to keep the key will depend on the specifics of each family's circumstances.

South Central Update

During the past two months, South Central has had several families either sign APA or finalize an adoption. This is very exciting! We also had approximately ten children reintegrated into the home. I am constantly amazed at the energy, love and dedication each of you put in for the kids in your home every day!

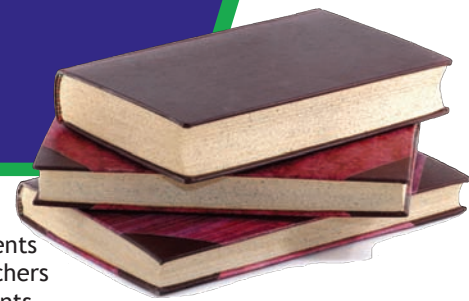
Ray Garcia has left the Newton foster care team. He will continue to be with Youthville as a youth care worker on the Newton cottage. We wish him well!

Tammy Gream, LMSW
Foster Care Supervisor
South Central

Understanding Rights for Disabled Children

Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans

http://www.apfed.org/downloads/IEP_and_504.pdf



What is an IEP?

An individual education plan (IEP) is part of the special education laws of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments of 1997. IDEA allows for additional services and protections for disabled children not offered to others that include extra accommodations, modifications and related special education services to allow the child to be successful in school.

What is a 504 plan?

Section 504 ensures that a child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications even if he or she does not qualify for special education. Any school or program receiving federal funds must abide by this law.

What are the similarities between the two plans?

Both plans can provide the student with certain accommodations and modifications to allow a disabled child to be more successful in school. Related services can be provided for students on either plan, such as occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. Neither plan requires the student to change locations and they may stay in a regular classroom.

What are the main differences between the two?

A student receiving special education through an IEP is protected under all Section 504 laws. The opposite is not true.

A 504 plan requires the school to develop safeguards, such as:

- Parental notice of evaluation or placement decision
- Parental review of records
- Impartial hearing for appeals

An IEP has a more elaborate system of safeguards, such as:

- Written notice of all evaluations
- Written notice of IEP and placement changes
- Right to independent evaluations at the school's expense
- Arbitration or mediation if the parent and school disagree
- An administrative complaint process
- Due process hearing

A 504 plan includes only accommodations, modifications and related services as needed. It does not allow for direct or indirect services with the student or consultation services regarding the student between the special education teacher and regular education teachers. IEP does provide for services through special education teachers with the student and consultation with the regular classroom teachers.

Qualifying for Special Education and an IEP

Special education allows a child to have an IEP when the child's disability interferes with their education and performance. Special education is available for all children that qualify from ages three through 21 or upon graduation from high school, whichever comes first. If a parent feels their child requires special education, the first step is to contact the child's school and explain how you feel your child's disability will affect education. The next step is the evaluation, which will include:

- An interview with parents
- An interview with teachers
- Information from parents
- Testing in all areas related to suspected disability
- A letter from a physician explaining the child's disability

If the child is qualified as "other health impaired" it does not require that testing be performed to show a learning disability. However, this does require proof from a physician of a medical disability that affects the child's education.

After the evaluation is completed, the team will meet. The team consists of the parent(s), the student (if he/she is at least 14 years old), regular education teacher, a local education agency representative (usually the principal) and a representative from any area that the child was tested in (i.e. speech pathologist, occupational therapist, psychologist). The parent may bring an advocate, such as a more experienced parent, to all team meetings. At the meeting, all findings will be reviewed, including the teacher's observations, the physician's information and any testing that has been completed. The parent may share any literature they have on the child's disability and how it will affect him or her in school. After discussing the findings, the team will make a decision on eligibility. The student will meet the criteria for qualification for special education under one of many eligible categories.

Criteria for special education qualification

OHI - Other Health Impaired	LI - Language and Speech Impairment
D-B - Deaf/Blindness	SLD - Specific Learning Disability
VI - Visual Impairment	1. Basic reading skills
HI - Hearing Impairment	2. Reading comprehension
ED - Emotional Disturbance	3. Oral expression
MR - Mental Retardation	4. Listening comprehension
MD - Multiple Disabilities	5. Mathematical computation
OI - Orthopedic Impairment	6. Mathematical reasoning
SP - Speech Impairment	7. Written expression

There are many reasons a child may qualify for special education, including a health impairment that interferes with their education. If the impairment is making it difficult for the student to master the educational material, the student may be eligible for special education services. If the child is found to be eligible, the next step will be putting together an IEP.

Developing an IEP

The team will meet and provide input on assistance the student needs to advance successfully in their education. The parent will be asked what they feel the child's strengths are, as well as their concerns regarding the child's education. The team will then decide on placement for the student. Students are placed in the regular classroom whenever possible.

Types of placement include:

- Regular class (with aids and services as needed)
- A special education classroom
- Special school

- At home
- A hospital
- Institution
- Another setting as deemed fit by the team

The student's placement can be changed as needed by writing an addendum to the IEP. (For example, if the child is to be in the hospital for an extended period, the team could amend the IEP to have the student receive services while in the hospital. Hospital or homebound services can also be provided as part of the services the child receives).

Some classroom modifications/accommodations could include:

- Preferential seating
- Copied material from book or board
- Copies of notes from another student
- Peer tutoring
- Behavior contracts
- Performance contracts
- Highlighted textbooks
- Set of textbooks for home use
- Taped materials
- Unlimited bathroom breaks

Some assignment accommodations/modifications could include:

- Assignment books
- Abbreviated assignments
- Additional time
- Study guides
- Extra grade opportunities
- Compacting

Some testing accommodations/modifications could include:

- Extended time
- Reading internal instructions aloud
- Reading testing items aloud
- Repeating directions verbatim
- Use of a calculator
- Use of a word processor with talk text technology
- Modified grading scales
- Modified test formats
- Abbreviated concepts
- Retesting

The final modifications and accommodations will need to be assessed for the individual and adjusted according to specific state regulations. The team will decide on any allowable accommodations for state/district mandated assessments. The allowable accommodations will differ state to state.

Direct Services are specialized instructional services provided to the student. This can be done in a number of settings such as:

- A special education teacher or aide in classroom
- Special education setting with or without other students
- Other appropriate settings

Indirect Services are provided when the special education teacher or other service providers do not work directly with the student. For example, the special education teacher or other services may consult with the regular classroom teacher to assist them in developing programs appropriate for the student. A special educator may monitor the student.

Related Services are not provided directly by the special education department but are needed for the disabled child's success in school. Examples are:

- Speech-language pathology
- Audiology services
- Psychological services
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Recreation services
- Social work services
- Counseling services
- Mobility services
- Homebound services
- Hospital services

Actual related services will need to be determined according to the individual student and the state they live in. When developing the IEP, the team should discuss the child's annual goals and how they will be measured.

What are a parent's rights if the child does not qualify for special education?

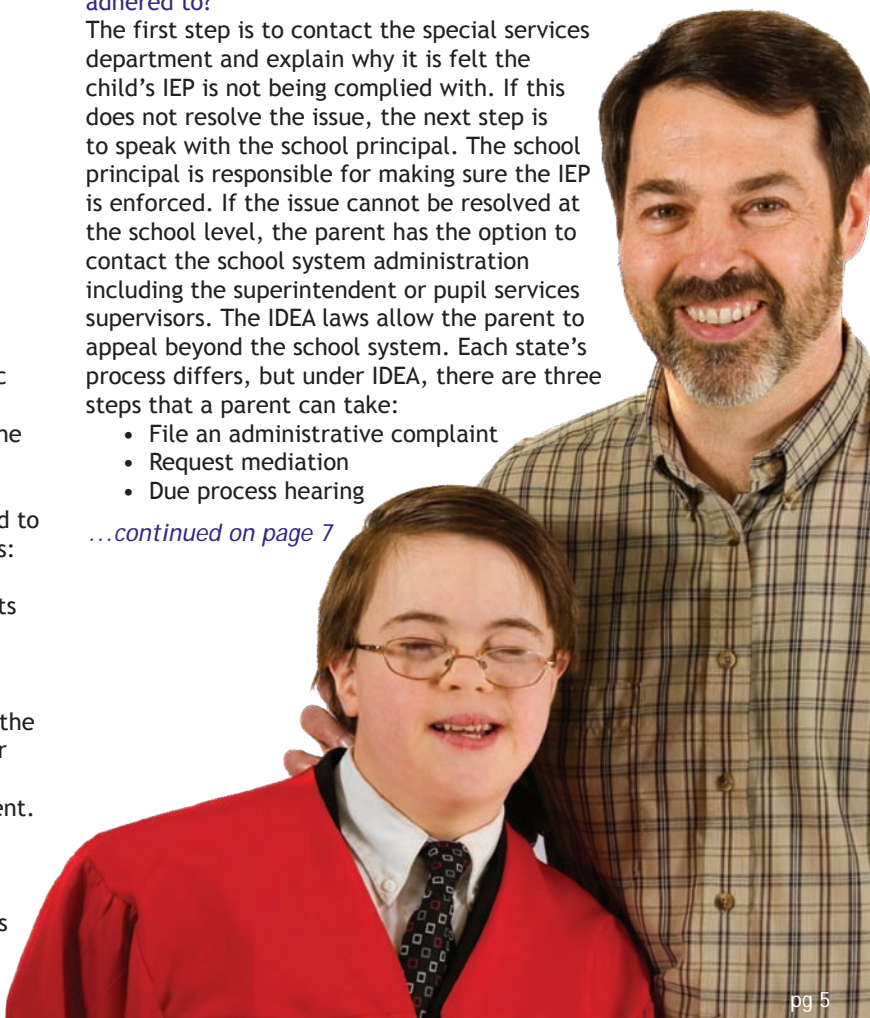
If the child does not qualify for special services, the parent can request an independent evaluation (performed and paid for by the school). The second evaluation is completed by an independent, outside source that the school and parent agree upon. The school system is required to pay the cost for the independent evaluation, but only after they have conducted the original evaluation and the parent has disagreed with the results. If, after the independent evaluation, the child is still denied special services and the parent does not agree with the decision, a due process hearing can be requested. This process differs from state to state.

What does a parent do when they feel their child's IEP is not adhered to?

The first step is to contact the special services department and explain why it is felt the child's IEP is not being complied with. If this does not resolve the issue, the next step is to speak with the school principal. The school principal is responsible for making sure the IEP is enforced. If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, the parent has the option to contact the school system administration including the superintendent or pupil services supervisors. The IDEA laws allow the parent to appeal beyond the school system. Each state's process differs, but under IDEA, there are three steps that a parent can take:



- File an administrative complaint
- Request mediation
- Due process hearing

...continued on page 7



February Training Dates

Check the training calendar on the foster care Web site for up-to-date info at www.youthville.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Social Work Ethics Rose Alderson 10:00am-2:00pm (Newton) When There Is A Crisis At Home Jennifer Meyer 10:00am-12:00pm (Pratt)
8	9 New Contracts & Changes Amy Tuttle 7:00-9:00pm (Colby)	10 Love & Logic 1 of 4 Shannon Reed 6:00-8:00pm (Beloit) Conscious Discipline Follow-up Shana Schmidt 6:30-8:30pm(Garden City) Creative Discipline Rose Alderson 7:00-9:00pm (Hays)	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day 
15	16 President's Day Open Forum Stacey Winter 6:30-8:00pm (Wichita) Working Through Conflict Beth Randall 6:30-8:30pm (Concordia)	17 	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Rights...

Continued

Qualifying for a 504 Plan

If the child qualifies for an IEP, the parent cannot legally choose to use a 504 plan instead. The first step is to contact the school the student is attending. Most schools will evaluate a student to see if they will qualify for special education first. If the child does not meet eligibility criteria for special education, the school will evaluate for a 504 plan. The team will gather information from the parents, classroom teachers, attending physician or others depending on the impairment. A 504 plan allows for modifications depending on the disability. Examples:

- Unlimited bathroom breaks
- Alternative arrangement at lunch and snack times
- Tests taken at separate locations
- Time limits waived or extended
- Educating other students regarding the child's disability
- The use of a word processor
- Taped materials
- Tests/reports given orally
- A scribe
- Shortened assignments
- Copy of class notes provided

504 plans also allow for related services as needed such as:

- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Speech and language therapy
- Audiology services

The final modifications will be individualized according to the specific state regulations. At the post-secondary level, the school is required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary services necessary to provide a disabled individual an equal opportunity to participate in the school's program.

What can be done if a disabled student's 504 plan is denied or not being followed?

First, the problem should be resolved with the school. If that fails, the parent can contact the superintendent. If the school or the administration of the school system does not resolve the problem, the parent may request a hearing. Section 504 requires school districts to conduct impartial hearings for parents who disagree with identification, evaluation or placement. Under Section 504, the parent has an opportunity to participate and obtain representation by counsel. Other details are left to the discretion of the school district.

Questionnaire

Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans

After reading the training article on pages 4 and 5, respond to the questions below and return the form for a half-hour training credit. Each parent wishing to receive credit must complete their own separate form. Please be sure to print your name and sign at the bottom.

1. True or False: An IEP & 504 Plan are the exact same.
2. Special education is available for what ages of children?
 - A. Only children 6-15 years old
 - B. Children 3-21 years old
 - C. Only children 5-18 years old
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of _____ is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
4. True or False: Physical therapy is a service that can be provided for a student on either a 504 or an IEP.
5. An example of an eligible category for special education is:
 - A. Preschool impairment
 - B. Traumatic brain injury
 - C. Both A & B
6. List two examples of a physical or mental disability that would substantially limit life activity and make a child eligible for a 504 plan.

7. True or False: Preferential seating is an accommodation that may be made for a student under a 504 Plan.
8. What did you find helpful in this article?
9. How will you use the information in your home?
10. What topics would you like to see future newsletter articles cover?

Print name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To receive credit, please return your completed form to:

Youthville
Attn: Jennifer Meyer
PO Box 210
Newton, KS 67114

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

If you receive duplicate mailings,
please call 316.283.1950, ext. 6129.
Thank you for your help!

MTFC Certification

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) was implemented at Youthville's Wichita office in January 2007. Since that time, Youthville MTFC has seen over an 80% graduation rate, which includes reintegration, adoption and independent living.

On October 31, 2008, Youthville MTFC demonstrated model fidelity and outcome standards established by the Center for Research to Practice and was approved by the Oregon Social Learning Center Community Programs for Certification in MTFC, its founding organization, as one of only 15 programs worldwide.

If you would like more information about MTFC, call Karen Lippoldt at 316.529.9100, ext. 8270.

QM Connection

Dear Resource Parents,

Youthville's discipline policy was revised recently to reflect KDHE regulations changes. The basic content of the policy remains the same, with one notable exception: 1) For each child in foster care who is not able to develop self-control or self-management, behavior management techniques shall be approved, in writing, by the case planning team. The policy goes on to speak to the use of physical restraint and de-escalation training requirements of care givers. If you have not already, your foster care worker will be reviewing the updated policy and answering questions you might have at an upcoming home visit. You will be asked to sign the policy with a copy provided to you for your records and a copy to be placed in your file at the agency.

Be sure to look for more information related to recent KDHE regulation changes in future Families By Choice newsletters as there is a lot of changes to keep up with and Youthville wants to ensure you are informed and educated!

Shannon Canton | Quality Management Coordinator