

# Between Families

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**April 2014**

## Foster Family Matters April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. This nationwide recognition month started in 1983. Since protection of children is a huge part of what TFI Family Services focuses on, we wanted to talk about different ways to prevent child abuse and some activities that happen around the state and nation.

There are five steps to preventing child abuse. The first is to advocate – talking to your lawmakers at the local and state level can increase awareness of prevention programs. Volunteering is the next piece of prevention. Everyone in the community plays a role in raising children, and there are organizations and boards you could join to help the cause. The third step is education. Mentor new parents, share parenting skills with neighbors, talk to groups about parenting and the effects of child abuse. The fourth step is support –you can call the following number to find services in your area – 1-800-CHILDREN. This piece is vital to promoting healthy communities for children. The final step in prevention is reporting. As foster parents, you are mandated reports and are required to complete this step if you discover a child has been abused or neglected. The DCF hotline number is 1-800-922-5330.

There are several events on the national, state, and local levels for Child Abuse Prevention Month. April 4th is designated as “Wear Blue Day” – you may see people out and about with ribbons on their shirts! You may also see blue pinwheels in yards of homes and businesses.

KCSL is planning a state event on April 11th at the Capitol

in Topeka. This event is scheduled to include a picture of a child from each county across the state for a Kansas map project on the Visitor Center floor.

If you live in Sedgwick County, check out the Family Fun Day hosted by the Sedgwick County CAP Coalition on April 12th at the Sedgwick County Zoo. The event will include extra games and activities for zoo guests. Those close to Shawnee County also have a fun opportunity – on April 19th, the Child Abuse Prevention Coalition of Shawnee County is hosting a Family Fun event, which will include a 5K and other activities.

Finally, the Kansas/Missouri bi-state coalition is hosting a family event with Sporting KC on April 19th. Jamie VanCompernelle can be contacted for more information about this event at 1-877-530-5275 ext 1204.

The Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) is the state’s chapter for Prevent Child Abuse America (see [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) for more information) and much of the information from this article comes from their website ([www.kcsl.org](http://www.kcsl.org)). You can visit their website for several links to child abuse prevention materials, including a pinwheel coloring sheet for your children! Have a safe and happy month.

Since protection of children is a huge part of what TFI Family Services focuses on, we wanted to talk about different ways to prevent child abuse and some activities that happen around the state and nation.





## Ever Considered Fostering? Have Lots of Questions?

Don't Know Where to Start?

Just Want to Know More?

Come visit with our staff, hear more about our services and get your questions answered in a fun, informative and pressure-free setting. Your children are welcome to join you.

**Monday, March 24, 2014**

**5:00pm-7:00pm**

*Feel free to come and go during this time frame.*

**Atchison Library  
401 Kansas Ave  
Atchison, KS 66002**  
(downstairs meeting room)

Aren't able to make the meeting, still want to know more? Call 1-800-279-9914



## Care Provider of the Month

Tommy and Tonya Williamson

Tommy and Tonya Williamson provide outstanding care to the children in their home. They are very natural at making children feel comfortable in their new surroundings. The Williamson family treats foster children as if they are their own and provides them with safety and love. Tommy and Tonya take their job as foster parents very seriously and are very active in any case plans or meetings regarding the children. The Williamsons maintain a respectful relationship with biological parents and are happy to offer support whenever needed.

Tommy and Tonya ensure that each kid in their home receives the services that they need to adequately adapt and grow in a healthy and supportive manner. The Williamsons work closely with daycare and preschool providers concerning the children's behaviors and progress. Tommy and Tonya work very closely with TFI and the contracting agency to ensure effective communication is taking place.

I have been fortunate to be the foster care worker for the Williamson home for nearly 6 months. They were very understanding and accepting of being assigned a new worker. On our first visit, Tommy and Tonya educated me on their history as foster parents and the children's case. The Williamsons are a very patient, kind, and caring family who invest in the children that are placed in their home. The Williamsons are an excellent example of what foster parenting is all about. I know undoubtedly that any child who comes through their home will be better for it.

# Happy Anniversary

## 1 year

Scott, Jeffrey and Courtnie  
Cammarata/Cammarata  
Rebecca Cowlshaw  
Shawn and Monika Homan  
Hillary Palmer  
Kristopher and Rebecca  
Smilko  
Tom and Darcy McDowell  
Teresa Songs  
Sheila Brown  
Allen and Rebecca (Becky)  
Zylstra  
Richard and Jaime Knavel

John and Sylvia Alden  
Luz Thomas  
Jorge and Destiny  
Munoz-Nunez/Nunez  
Gerald and Claudia Devine  
Alfonso and Crystal Paredes  
April Bell  
Charles and Carrie Gibbs  
Scott and Tammy Archdekin  
Tyrone and Sharon  
Glessner  
Scott Oakes

## 5 years

Lori Henderson  
Leon and Ryneck Sharp  
Kelvin and Patricia Atkins  
Troy and Shari Steadham  
Jason and Ronda Spooner

## 10 years

John and Barbara Oliver  
Paul and Betty Lewis  
Robert and Elizabeth  
Smith/Long

## LICENSING REMINDER

Per KDHE requirements, from April through September, all foster homes must complete monthly tornado drills. Drills need to be held on a rotating basis - a different day each month. Please be sure to document your monthly drills on a Tornado Drill Record. Ask your Foster Care Worker for a copy if you do not have one. Thank you and stay safe!

## Recruitment Moment "Spring into Action"

Greetings!!

First let me start out by saying, what a wild winter we have had!! I personally am looking forward to some brighter, warmer days! Warmer weather will allow all of us some much needed outdoor time! When you are getting out and about more, I would like for you all to remember one thing. We all want to keep our kids local, right? How do we do that? Who is it that is helping us to do that? YOU!! One thing has remained the same over the years - our foster families are our best resource! Remember, when others see you in action, it makes it more possible for them to picture themselves fostering. Conversations with others about what you do and why are so very important. We want to say thank you for referring those families as well!

Every time you refer a family and they become licensed, you receive a \$500.00 incentive bonus.

So, what are you waiting for? "Spring into Action" and help us keep kids local. Thank you all very much for all that you do!

After hour emergencies, please call 1(877)921-4114.

For the most current calendar for Kansas Children Alliance Training, go to: <http://childally.org/train/>

Connect with us:



[www.tfifamilyservices.org](http://www.tfifamilyservices.org)



[www.facebook.com/tfifamilyservices](http://www.facebook.com/tfifamilyservices)



[www.twitter.com/tfifamily](http://www.twitter.com/tfifamily)

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## Foster Family Living: Ways to help with the transitions of leaving

By Rachelle Roosevelt, LMSW

As a foster family, you will inevitably face a foster child leaving your home with whom you and your children have developed a strong bond and love. This can be through

the child reintegrating back with their parents, moving to an adoptive home, moving to another foster home, or moving to relatives. Every effort should be made to make the transition to the new home as least traumatic way as possible, for both the foster child and you and your family. Telling the children in your home as soon as you and the foster child know he or she will be leaving is an important first step.

Some creative ideas to help your family and the foster child to transition include:

- Have a goodbye party
- Keep a memory box for the child to send with them as he/she leaves

- Prepare photo albums or frames with pictures of your home, family, etc.
- draw a picture or write a letter to send with the child
- go to Build-a-Bear Workshop® and make each child (foster and bio/adopted kids) matching bears. Fill each bear with a heart for each child to represent the love from “siblings” together for just a little while, but will be together forever in their hearts.
- If you have the child over Christmas, make an ornament for the child, and send with him or her. Have the child make an ornament as well with a picture, and keep it for your family.
- Recognize that children feel and grieve loss in different ways. Some may not be fazed by the child leaving; others will suffer significant grief and loss.
- Keep a scrapbook of the children you have had in your home. (Remember confidentiality)
- Remember the stages of grief are:
  - Shock and denial that the children will leave.
  - Anger at the state, child welfare system, and possibly the parents.
  - Bargaining phase could include trying to get the caseworker to let the kids stay longer.
  - Despair/Depression is normal. It is okay to miss the children, and cry about them being gone.
  - Acceptance/Understanding/Resolution: in this stage, it is now time to accept your next placement

It is important for you to help your family to prepare for and cope with the foster child to leaving, as well as being prepared to grieve yourself. A seasoned foster parent once said, “You can’t protect yourself from the pain but you can learn to deal with it.” The following ideas will help you:

- Discuss what you learned in your training about the changes foster care will create in your family
- Talk about the child’s leaving with your children
- Let them grieve it in their own ways

It is always okay to take some time from fostering to process the loss and grief. Be sure to talk to your worker if you need to do this.

Citations:

<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fosterparent/pages/articles/prepare-children.aspx>  
<http://voices.yahoo.com/foster-parents-must-allow-themselves-grieve-2652841.html>  
<http://offbeatfamilies.com/2013/01/foster-kid-adopted#.UykJWqgo7VI>  
<http://kidhero.chw.org/2013/09/05/how-will-becoming-a-foster-parent-affect-your-biological-children/>  
<http://jennyb-biologicalkidsinafosterhome.blogspot.com/>