

# News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Volume 8, Issue 1

Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



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## Take a Break through the Parent-to-Parent Network

On September 1<sup>st</sup>, the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition was awarded the Eastern Missouri Adoption Resource Center contract through ARCHS and the Children's Division. This allowed us to add support services such as: educational advocacy, youth support groups and parents' nights out. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, we will add another key support, the Parent-to-Parent Network.

This is a network where parents can help other parents by providing short-term child care. Although not part of the State of Missouri's paid respite care program, it is very similar.

Participants in the Parent-to-Parent Network will complete three-hours of training, complete a current background check, and have a home visit by our Director of Family Development, Kimberly Like. Once you are matched with another family, then you are ready to go!

Are you interested in the Parent-to-Parent Network? Then, contact Kimberly Like at [kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org](mailto:kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org) or 314.FOSTER.3 x35. The Parent-to-Parent Network training will be at the Training Extravaganza on March 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m. Childcare will be provided.

## Ask the Educational Advocate

Dear Leslie,

*Our child is struggling in school, having difficulty with reading and math, not able to pay attention or stay on task, and has difficulty following his school rules. How do I get an evaluation for special education services for my child?*

Thanks

Ann and Joe



Dear Ann and Joe,

An evaluation will determine if your child is eligible for special education instruction. If you have a concern about your child's progress, it is important to make a request for an evaluation in writing to your child's teacher, school principal, and counselor. The request should indicate specific learning and/or behavior concerns.

There are Federal guidelines and eligibility criteria to be met prior to initiation of special education instruction. Each school district is responsible for following guidelines after a parent makes a request for an evaluation. The school "Care or Support Team" will:

- gather information, review your child's achievement, behavior and your concerns;
- develop a set of interventions/strategies to assist your child and document the success of these interventions/strategies;
- collect other pertinent data concerning your child's learning;
- meet several times to determine if an evaluation is appropriate. The team may decide that an evaluation is warranted or that one is not needed; and
- notify you in writing about that decision.

If the team decides an evaluation is appropriate, an evaluation plan will be developed and you must give your written consent for the evaluation to go forward. The district has sixty days to complete the evaluation and meet with you to discuss the results after you give consent.

Based on the results of the evaluation your child may be able to receive special education and/or related services. If the evaluation indicates your child is eligible for special education services, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be written with you to determine those services.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 800.FOSTER.3 x37, or [leslielewis@foster-adopt.org](mailto:leslielewis@foster-adopt.org).

Respectfully,

Leslie Lewis, Director of Educational Advocacy

Educational Advocacy Services are made possible through the support of ARCHS and the Missouri Children's Division



314-FOSTER-3 or 1-800-FOSTER-3  
[www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org)



## Parent Support Groups

Parent Support Groups are made possible by the National Foster Parent Association.

### All Upcoming Groups are held:

6:00 - 8:00p.m.

God's Grace Church  
10308 Lackland Road, 63114  
Dinner & child care provided.

**Must be registered to attend.**

### January

#### 8th - "Can't We All Just Get Along?" Family Dynamics and Blending

This group will help you deal with adding foster/adopted children to the family, birth order, competition and sibling rivalry.

#### 29th - "Say What?!" Responding to Insensitive Questions

Equip yourself with positive responses to personal questions. Understand confidentiality and prepare children for conversations with sensitive subjects.

### February

#### 18th - "It's All Good Hair" Hair/Skin Care for African American Child

Caring for your foster or adopted child's hair can be an overwhelming experience, but it doesn't have to be. Learn the right techniques and the products to use.

To register, please contact Kimberly Like at 800.FOSTER.3 x35, or [kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org](mailto:kimberlylike@foster-adopt.org).

## REAL TALK: Support Group for Older Youth

The program "Real Talk" helps youth gain a better understanding of adoption and discuss their unique concerns.

### All Upcoming Groups are held:

6:00 - 8:00p.m.

God's Grace Church  
10308 Lackland Road, 63114  
Dinner & child care provided.

**Must be registered to attend.**

### January

#### 8th - New Kids on the Block

Transitioning into an adoptive home when biological or adoptive children are already there.

#### 29th - My Bio Mom, My Bio Dad

Wrestling with the desire to know and find biological parents.

### February

#### 18th - What's Race got to do with it?

Identifying and understanding racial and cultural identity issues when the race of the adopted family differs from their adopted child.

To register, please contact Aaron Layton at 800.FOSTER.3 x34, or [aaronlayton@foster-adopt.org](mailto:aaronlayton@foster-adopt.org).

## A Guide to Assist in Meeting the Mental Health needs of Children in Foster Care

Working with psychiatrists and understanding psychotropic medications can be complicated. In an effort to help child welfare professionals and foster/adopt parents better understand these aspects of child mental health, the Center for Mental Health Services Research partnered with the Children's Division to develop an educational guide. "Working with Psychiatrists and Psychotropic Medications for Children in the Child Welfare System: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals, Judges, Lawyers, Foster Parents, and Family Members" can be found on-line at <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/cmhsr/psychotropic/index.htm>.

The website includes sections on frequently asked questions, a medications chart, and additional resources. Under the frequently asked questions sections you will find the answers to the following:

### Frequently Asked Questions about Psychiatric Evaluations:

- When should I seek a psychiatric consultation for a child in the child welfare system?
- What should I tell the psychiatrist about the child and the child's situation?
- What should a psychiatric evaluation entail?

### Frequently Asked Questions about Psychiatric Medicines:

- What are the psychotropic medications that are prescribed for children?
- Has research been conducted on children to know how safe and effective these drugs are for kids?
- The doctor prescribed a drug that seems to be for a disorder that this child doesn't have. What is up with that?

Visit <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/cmhsr/psychotropic/index.htm> to read the responses to the above frequently asked questions and many more.

This Website is sponsored and maintained by the Center for Mental Health Services Research (CMHSR) within the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. It was prompted by a research study led by Curtis McMillen, PhD, and facilitated by the Research Network Development Core (RNDC) - a partnership initiative between the Center and the Children's Division of the Missouri Department of Social Services. The RNDC and this project are funded through a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

## Prior Authorization for Counseling Services

Beginning January 2, 2008 mental health professionals who are working with children in foster homes will be required to request Prior Authorizations (PA) from the MO HealthNet Division (MHD) for services they are providing. Below are some common questions related to this process and general information to help you better understand this new requirement.

- **Why is PA now being required?** Concerns have been raised that some children in foster care are not receiving the most effective mental health treatment. An advisory group recommended that the authorization process be used as a tool to make sure children in foster care are receiving the best treatment possible.
- **Which professionals fall under this requirement?** The PA requirement process includes the following mental health services that are being provided to a child in foster care living in a foster home or residential placements (children adopted are excluded from this requirement): psychological services provided by a psychiatrist, psychologist or provisionally licensed psychologist, psychiatric clinical nurse specialist, licensed clinical social worker, provisionally licensed clinical social worker, licensed professional counselor, provisionally licensed professional counselor, rural health clinic, and federally qualified health clinic.
- **What do you need to do as a foster parent?** The PA requirement is not intended to create any changes in the way foster parents obtain mental health care for their foster children. Mental health providers who are currently providing services to foster children need to contact MO HealthNet directly to continue providing services beyond January 1, 2008. So, you may want to check-in with your foster child's mental health provider to ensure they have complied and minimize the chance of any break in service.
- **Who can I contact if I have questions about the PA requirement?** You may contact the Participants Unit of the MO HealthNet Division (MHD) at 800.392.2161 or 573.751.6527.

MHD and its partners will be assessing these changes to determine if the desired outcomes have occurred with the Prior Authorization requirements. You may provide your feedback directly to MHD or to the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition at 314.FOSTER.3. Additional information on the Prior Authorization requirement can be found on the Children's Division website at [www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2007/cd0769.pdf](http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/info/memos/2007/cd0769.pdf).

## **Adoption Tax Credits**

The information below is not to be construed as legal advice. It is always advisable to consult a tax professional with individual questions.

### **Federal Tax Credit**

Beginning in 2003, families adopting a child with special needs from foster care were able to access a federal adoption tax credit without needing to document expenses. For tax year 2007, the tax credit is over \$11,390 per child and parents have this year and up to the next five years in which to claim the credit.

### **How do I know if my child is considered to have special needs according to the IRS?**

The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) interprets the instructions for Form 8839 (the Adoption Tax Credit form) this way: If you receive adoption subsidy (assistance) for your child, the state that provides the subsidy has determined that your child has special needs. Your adoption subsidy agreement (or application and agreement) is the evidence that the state has determined your child to have special needs. These instructions (found at [www.irs.gov/instructions/i8839/ch02.html#d0e284](http://www.irs.gov/instructions/i8839/ch02.html#d0e284)) state:

A child is considered special needs if all three of the following statements are true:

1. The child was a citizen or resident of the United States or its possessions at the time the adoption process began.
2. A state (including the District of Columbia) has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to his or her parents' home.
3. The state has determined that the child will not be adopted unless assistance is provided to the adoptive parents. Factors used by states to make this determination include:
  - A. The child's ethnic background and age,
  - B. Whether the child is a member of a minority or sibling group, and
  - C. Whether the child has a medical condition or a physical, mental, or emotional handicap.

***If you check the box in column (d), indicating the child has special needs, be sure to keep evidence of the state's determination in your records.***

*For more information or questions, visit [www.nacac.org/postadopt/taxcredit](http://www.nacac.org/postadopt/taxcredit) or contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) at 651.644.3036 or [adoption.assistance@nacac.org](mailto:adoption.assistance@nacac.org).*

### **Missouri Tax Credit**

As part of Missouri's enacted legislation, HB 1453, two-million dollars in adoption tax credits are set aside for adoption of children who are wards of the state. You may even be able to claim the credit for adoptions that occurred in previous years.

Before proceeding, let's review what a tax credit is. According to IRS Publication 968, "The adoption credit is the amount that you subtract from your tax liability." The following summarizes the information on the Missouri Department of Revenue website, <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/atc.htm>.

#### **Purpose:**

Provides a credit to assist in the nonrecurring adoption expenses for a special needs child. Note: most nonrecurring adoption expenses of a child in foster care are paid for by the state.

#### **Eligible Applicants:**

Any person residing in this state that legally adopts a special needs child is eligible to receive a tax credit up to \$10,000 for nonrecurring adoption expenses for each child.

#### **Eligible Activities:**

The child must be a special needs child as determined by the Children's Division, a child-placing agency licensed by the state, or by a court of competent jurisdiction.

#### **How the Program Works**

To claim the Adoption Tax Credit, the parent, or their employer if the employer is claiming the full credit, must complete Form MO-ATC. The claimant must attach a copy of the completed Form MO-ATC along with the tax return the first year the credit is being claimed. Effective January 1, 2000, up to 50 percent of any tax credits earned for adoptions finalized after January 1, 2000, may be claimed upon placement of the child and the remaining 50 percent claimed after the special needs adoption is final.

*For more information or questions, visit <http://dor.mo.gov/tax/taxcredit/atc.htm>, or contact Missouri Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation and Collection at 573.522.2089, or [taxcredit@dor.mo.gov](mailto:taxcredit@dor.mo.gov).*

## **Sylvan Seeks Children in Foster Care to Tutor**

There was an error in the information about free tutoring from Sylvan in the previous NYCU. Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition apologizes for any inconvenience.

To be eligible for free tutoring from Sylvan your child must attend a school that is in the second year of "School Improvement" status. The school must provide free Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to children from low income families in the areas of reading and math. It also must be a Title I school.

FACC is aware of the great need for tutoring for our children. We are working on a project to be able to provide tutoring at little or no cost.

*For more information, contact Leslie Lewis, Director of Educational Advocacy, at 800.FOSTER.3 x37, or [leslielewis@foster-adopt.org](mailto:leslielewis@foster-adopt.org).*

## **FACC 2008 Training Extravaganzas**

Thanks to grants from the Daughters of Charity, Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition will continue hosting Training Extravaganzas in 2008! Training Extravaganzas earn caregivers 7.5 hours in training.

**Save the Dates for 2008 Training Extravaganzas:**  
March 1st • May 31st  
August 2nd • October 18th

## **Parents: Become a Media Representative!**

FACC is often approached by the media about foster care and adoptive issues. If you feel you have a story to share with Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition or the media, please contact Heather Henke at 800.FOSTER.3 x36, or [heatherhenke@foster-adopt.org](mailto:heatherhenke@foster-adopt.org).

## **Subscribe to e-News You Can Use**

A lot happens between newsletters... If you would like to be included in the e-News You Can Use, a bi-weekly update sent directly to your e-mail account regarding workshops, free movie passes and more, send an e-mail to [heatherhenke@foster-adopt.org](mailto:heatherhenke@foster-adopt.org) or sign-up through the FACC website at [www.foster-adopt.org](http://www.foster-adopt.org).

# News You Can Use

From the Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition

Eastern Missouri Foster and Adoptive Care Resource Center



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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition is a not-for-profit agency which strives to create permanency in every foster child's life by recruiting and supporting foster/adoptive homes in the St. Louis metropolitan community.

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## Kid Store

The Kid Store, a resale shop open exclusively to foster/adoptive, relative/kin caregivers, caseworkers and GALs/CASAs, announces:

**“Jack Frost is finally here, our foster kids need warm gear!”**

Warm teen clothing for boys and girls, as well as new or like-new coats, boots, gloves and hats are needed!

**Hours:**  
1st & 3rd Wednesday  
ALL Saturdays  
9a.m.-12p.m.

Only 5 minutes  
from the  
Poplar Street  
Bridge!



**Kid Store**  
Located in Tyler  
Place Presbyterian  
Church, 2109 S.  
Spring, St. Louis,  
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## Wendy's Wonderful Kids

Fourteen-year-old Sirnitra is a lovely, “typical” teenage girl with a beautiful smile and warm, sparkling eyes. She radiates an inviting, full-of-life quality that along with her caring nature and sense of humor makes her quite likeable.



Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

Sirnitra enjoys singing and dancing, and loves listening to music. She is very creative, and enjoys demonstrating her creativity through arts and crafts, and photography. Sirnitra is very athletic and particularly likes playing basketball. Sirnitra, who also loves to cook, says that she would like to be a chef someday. Sirnitra is legally free for adoption. She is resilient and ever hopeful, and longs to be a part of a forever family.

For more information, please contact Connie Doty, Wendy's Wonderful Kids Recruiter at 800.FOSTER.3, or [conniedoty@foster-adopt.org](mailto:conniedoty@foster-adopt.org).



## A Place to Call Home

This section includes children featured on **KSDK NewsChannel 5's** “A Place to Call Home.” The segment airs during the following newscasts: **Tuesdays, 6:00p.m.; Thursdays, 5:00a.m., and Saturdays, 9:00a.m.**

## Aired in November 2007

Kirstie and William are a brother and sister pair who love to play. Six-year-old Kirstie is all girl. She loves to sing, dance and throw tea parties. Nine-year-old William loves to fish and play outdoors. These two adorable children want to find a forever home together. They enjoyed their day at the Magic House Children's Museum where they jumped right into the fun-filled, interactive exhibits. If you missed the segment you can watch it at [www.ksdk.com](http://www.ksdk.com) - “A Place to Call Home” - Featured Children.



Photo Courtesy of Sears Portrait Studio

For more information, please contact Sheila Suderwalla, Director of APTCH and Project Teen at 800.FOSTER.3 x30, or at [sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org](mailto:sheilasuderwalla@foster-adopt.org).

