



Staff Information

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A Message from the Crew:

School presents many challenges to children (and their families) who are in foster care or who are adopted. The answers to these challenges are unique to every situation and change throughout the child's developmental stages. However, here are some guidelines:

Follow the child's lead. Ultimately, the details surrounding the child's life story belong to the child—it is his or her privacy that matters most. Some children enjoy telling about their adoption and are comfortable answering questions. Other children find it embarrassing to be singled out and would prefer not to share that information with classmates. It is important to talk to your child to understand how he or she feels and what information, if any, he/she would like you to share with the teacher. If your child is struggling with behaviors that may put him/her or other children at risk, it is important you share enough information with the school personnel to develop a safety plan that takes these behaviors into consideration.

Practice what to say with your child. At some point, especially if your child does not look like the rest of your family, other children (or adults unfortunately) will ask him personal questions. *Where is your real mom? Why didn't*

she want you? Do you speak Chinese? How come you have dark skin and your mom has white? When your child gets these questions, it is much easier if you have already helping him practice an answer. Teach him ways to respond that are polite while still maintaining his privacy. Some tools to help can be found on-line at The Center for Adoption Support and Education or Adoptive Families magazine.

Be prepared for tricky assignments. Ever year it seems kids come home with some assignment that is challenging for foster and adopted children such as the family tree, bringing a baby picture, studying hereditary traits. All of these cause conflict for children who often have complicated pasts. Lots of ideas exists on how to handle these issues—review the web, adoption literature, or talk to your child's therapist or caseworker ahead of time so you can be prepared to help.

CHS staff are available to consult with you regarding sharing information with your child's school, to talk directly with school personnel, or to speak to your child's class about foster care and adoption. If you would like to receive this service, contact any of the Education and Counseling staff.

Training Calendar
Inside

Register early—class
sizes are often limited!

We believe:

All children are able to grow to their fullest potential as members of loving and supportive families.

All children deserve a family that is able to meet their emotional, developmental and physical needs.

Children who have been abused, neglected or otherwise traumatized will bring with them to their new families their feelings of hurt and anger, as well as the negative behaviors they use to express those feelings.

Families formed through the adoption process are equal to families created by birth in their love for and commitment to their children.

Families formed through the adoption process face challenges unique to adoptive families.

The challenges and issues faced by foster and adoptive families require specialized skills on the part of the parents as well as the professionals serving the family.

It is essential that the systems and professionals involved in the process of forming families through foster care and adoption be available at all stages of the family's life – prior to, during and after permanency is achieved.

Parenting the Second Time Around

A New Class for Grandparents and Others Offers An Opportunity to Share Information and Meet Others Raising Children... Again

Are you or is someone you know raising a grandchild or a family member's child? Do you have concerns about the future? What is the best way to deal with the child's parents?

This workshop can help you answer these questions.

An increasing number of grand parents and relatives nationwide are making the commitment to raise children. In 2007, statistics showed that more than 6 million American children, or 1 in every 12, were living in grandparent's or other relative's households. In Missouri, almost 78,000 children live in grandparent-headed households and another 18,500 live in households headed by other relatives. This is almost 7% of all children living in Missouri.

Raising grandchildren and children of relatives present unique emotional, physical, financial and legal issues for caregivers. Access to resources and support is an

important way to make this experience better.

Children's Home Society is a member of the Missouri Grandfamily Coalition which works to help relatives filling the role of parents. CHS is offering a seven-week workshop for families raising relatives. The workshop is designed to build a sense of confidence and comfort for grandparents or relatives who are in (or who are moving into) a parenting role with their grandchildren or relative's children, regardless of the status of legal custody. The workshop will cover topics including discipline, planning for the future, connecting with community programs, internet safety, feelings about new roles, child development and relating to your adult child or relative.

See the enclosed calendar for specific dates and times.

Don't Forget

Children's Home Society has full-time therapists on staff who specialize in working with foster and adoptive families. We accept Medicaid or have a sliding scale for private-pay.

Navigating the IEP Process

Back to school often represents a challenge for children who have histories of trauma. Many of them struggle to follow the rules, stay on task, and navigate the social situations that occur during the school day. For kids who have had to worry about protecting themselves and staying out of harm's way, it can be very difficult to focus on the concepts of geometry or English literature. Sometimes additional services may be the best way to help them be successful.

The U.S. public education system is required to accommodate all children, no matter what their needs. Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) was first authorized through the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 and one way of making FAPE a reality is the Individualized Educational Plan, commonly known as an IEP. An IEP is a set of goals and strategies to help each child learn most effectively.

If you suspect that your child has a disability that is affecting his/her ability to function in school, it is always best to start with your child's teacher and to discuss the concerns

you have with him or her. If you feel you are not being heard or your child needs to be evaluated for special education services, request this in writing to the school administrator. Follow up if you do not receive a response. The process will differ depending on the school your child attends. If your child is referred, an evaluation will be completed and an individualized education program (IEP) will be developed.

If your child will be receiving special education services during his/her school year, an initial decision will be made about his/her placement in a type of classroom setting designed to best support your child's IEP. At least yearly, you will have a formal IEP conference to plan your child's education for the following year. The conference is usually held on the anniversary of the date when your child was first accepted for services or one year from the date when your child's last IEP was held. Changes to the IEP can be made throughout the year by amending or modifying without reconvening the IEP team.

CHS is proud to be a member of the United Way

The United Way of Greater St. Louis is beginning this year's annual fundraising campaign. Children's Home Society of Missouri has been a United Way-funded agency since 1996 and receives significant funding each year. Our allocations from the United Way support all of our programs, including the counseling, education and support groups available to foster and adoptive families. If you find yourself talking to family, friends, co-workers or any others about the services offered here at CHS, please make sure to let them know that the United Way is an essential source of support for us. For more information, visit www.stl.unitedway.org.





CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

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*Improving the Quality of
Life for Children in Need
Since 1891*

You are not alone

This past weekend was the 17th annual dinner auction to raise money for Children's Home Society. During the live auction, one of the programs of CHS is highlighted and attendees are asked to make donations specifically to this cause. This year focused on the services provided in the Education and Counseling department, including our parenting classes, therapy services and support groups. *The response was amazing — over \$39,000 was raised in about 10 minutes time.* We were thrilled

of course as this allows us to continue our mission to assist adoptive and foster families through knowledge, support and resources.

Also, we believe that the financial support represents an understanding of the some of the challenges faced by children who have a history of abuse and neglect and a desire to make services available to help them heal.



One of the many classes offered at CHS on parenting children with special needs.

Many of you have commented that you feel isolated from family and friends who have different parenting experiences than your own. We hope you realize through events like this that there are people who are want to help.