

AUGUST 2, 2011

Back TO School

Where has the summer gone?

It is already August and that means the first day of school is right around the corner. IFAPA has dedicated an entire issue of our Weekly Word to helping parents get prepared for the next school year.

Did you know that all foster children are eligible for free school lunches? DHS and the Department of Education (DE) electronically match names of children who are eligible for free school lunches. In addition to the match including children on FIP and Food Assistance, Foster Care children are being added this year because they now qualify for free school lunches.

DHS sends school lunch letters only for children who are not identified by the match. These letters will be mailed from DHS Central Office on July 28th. The letters will be mailed to FIP and Food Assistance households and to the Social Worker for children who are in foster care. The letters must be given to the school for unmatched children to get free lunches.



Did you know foster children also qualify for free or reduced fees for drivers education? Every school district in Iowa must offer an approved driver education course to all students residing in the district and to Iowa students attending a nonpublic school in the district or make a driver education course available. If the district contracts to have a proprietary approved driver education provider, the district still has the obligation to provide free or reduced driver education fees to all students in the district eligible. (Please note that there are some districts that do not provide free driver's education courses.) Foster parents may not grant permission for a foster child to participate in driver's education. Contact your DHS worker for guidance in obtaining consent for your foster child's enrollment in driver's education.



ALL FOSTER CHILDREN NOW ELIGIBLE FOR HEAD START

Foster children who meet program age requirements are automatically eligible for Head Start & Early Head Start even if the family or foster family income exceeds income guidelines. The Office of Head Start encourages Head Start/Early Head Start agencies to prioritize children in the public child welfare system when establishing enrollment selection criteria and selecting children & families for Head Start/Early Head Start services. www.iowaheadstart.org



Free Booklet from IFAPA

Adoption Basics for Educators: How Adoption Impacts Children and How Educators Can Help



As educators enter the schools of the 21st century, they are encountering an increasingly diverse population of students. Students are not only coming from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds, but also from varied family situations, including adoptive families. Adoptive families can exhibit considerable diversity, including infant, international, older child, sibling group, kinship, and special needs adoption. Regardless of the type of adoption, most adopted children deal with emotional issues surrounding adoption. Unless educators have a personal connection with adoption, they may not understand how these issues impact their students and affect students' school performances. IFAPA developed this booklet to provide educators with basic information about adoption-related issues and the effect these issues might have on students, as well as suggestions on how educators can assist and advocate for students who are adopted.



To request a free copy (or multiple copies) of this booklet, please e-mail Crystal Thomason at cthomason@ifapa.org or call 800-277-8145 ext. 5. This booklet and many other free publications for foster, adoptive & kinship families can be found online at http://www.ifapa.org/resources/IFAPA_publications.asp.

HAVE A CHILD THAT STRUGGLES IN SCHOOL?



IFAPA offers the following training and support to help parents with education issues.

NEED SUPPORT?

Do you have an education-related question and need some support? Call Nancy Magnall, one of IFAPA's Resource Information Specialists. Nancy Magnall has been employed as a Resource Information Specialist with IFAPA for over 10 years and provides support and resources to foster and adoptive families. She specializes in educational advocacy and learning disabilities. Nancy can be reached at 877-467-4100 or by e-mailing her at magnall_ifapa@msn.com.

UPCOMING TRAINING:

Special Education Basics

(3 hrs credit) - If you have a child who is failing classes, having a hard time concentrating in school, having trouble with reading, writing, or math, they may be eligible for extra help in school. IFAPA's Special Education Basics training will help you learn about the legal protections provided by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. You will learn the basics of identification, evaluation, and eligibility for special education services, IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings and plans, provision of services, measurement of progress, and re-evaluation. Participants will receive resources to help them learn more about special education and advocating for their child. *Trainer: Nancy Magnall*

Upcoming Training Dates:

FORT DODGE

Sat., Sept. 10 (1:30pm-4:45pm)
Iowa Central Community College

DUBUQUE

Sat., Oct. 8 (1:30pm-4:45pm)
Keystone AEA

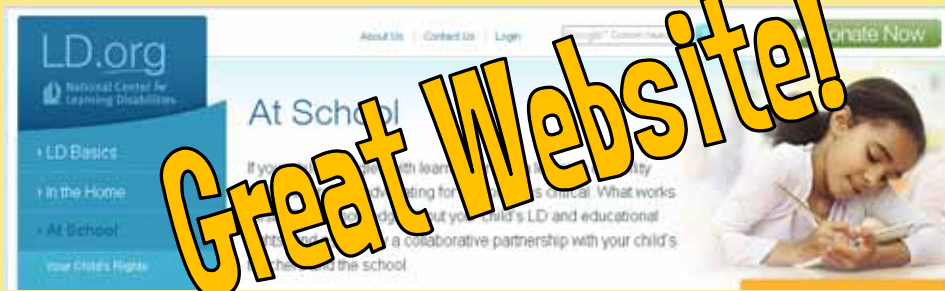
TO REGISTER FOR A TRAINING -

Call IFAPA at 800-277-8145 ext.1 or 515-289-4567 ext.1. To sign-up for a class through our website, visit:
www.ifapa.org/training/training_registration_form.asp

School & Extracurricular Parental Consent Form

Foster parents are NOT to sign permission slips for a child in foster care. Only the child's parent or legal guardian has the authority and the right to give consent for routine medical care, participation in school activities, including field trips and sports, obtaining a drivers permit or license and travel out-of-state. The legal custodian may authorize only emergency medical care.

When you are asked to give written permission or consent for a school or extracurricular activity, contact your child's DHS social worker to request the necessary signature from the parent or guardian or to obtain permission from the court. The foster parent is NEVER to sign as the parent or guardian. You can find the **Agreement & Consent Form for School Activities** on the IFAPA website at:
http://www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/470-4538.pdf



The National Center for Learning Disabilities website contains a wealth of helpful back-to-school information. You can read the following articles and so much more!

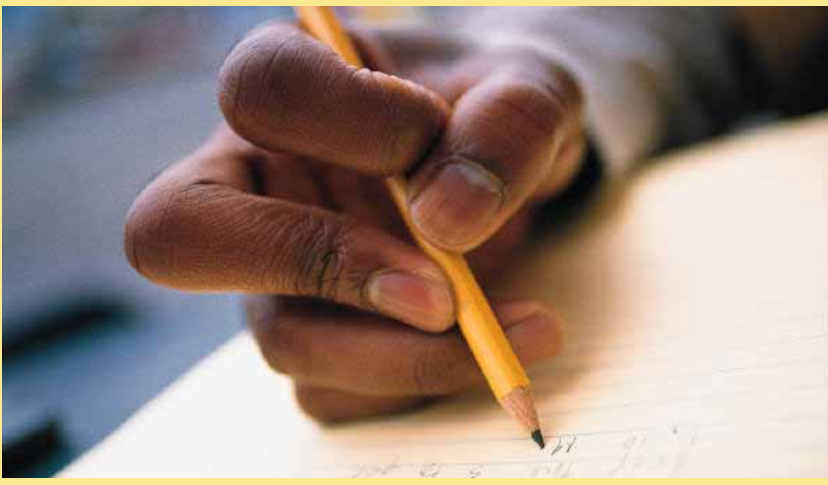
Parent Toolkit: Back-to-School for Parents of Students with Learning Disabilities
www.nclld.org/images/stories/Publications/parentadvocacyguides/nclld_back2schooltk_final.pdf

Building a Good Relationship with Your Child's Teacher
www.nclld.org/at-school/general-topics/parentschool-partnership/building-a-good-relationship-with-your-childs-teacher

Making Technology Part of Your Back-to-School Planning
www.nclld.org/at-school/general-topics/assistive-technology/making-technology-part-of-your-back-to-school-planning

Types of Records a Parent Needs to Keep
<http://www.nclld.org/publications-a-more/checklists-worksheets-a-forms/records-checklist>

Find more articles at: www.nclld.org.



How to Help Your Child with Their Homework:

Parents play a crucial role in encouraging their children to study and learn. Here are tips on ways you can help your child:

- Teach your child to organize, prioritize, and set goals.
- Provide an environment conducive to study. Eliminate as many distractions as possible.
- Remove barriers and don't accept excuses.
- Make homework time part of the regular family routine.
- Encourage your children to do their own work. Don't let them copy (cheat) and don't do homework for them.
- Show your child how you remember and meet deadlines.
- Teach your children memory tricks.
- Let your children see how you do the homework required by your job.
- Pay attention to whether or not your child is keeping up. Check with teachers if necessary.
- Teach your child to break down big assignments into manageable tasks and take one step at a time.
- Help your child understand his/her learning style.
- To the extent possible, provide your child with the tools for study (paper, pencils, dictionary, computer, etc.)
- Discuss current events as a family.
- Praise effort as well as results.
- Encourage your child to take risks and try new things.
- Celebrate successes; don't nit-pick or expect perfection.
- Don't threaten or offer bribes.

Questions to Ask at Parent-Teacher Conferences

1. How is my child doing?
2. What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?
3. What are the academic standards for the grade? Is my child meeting them? If not, what can we do to help?
4. Is my child experiencing any difficulty of which I should be aware? If so, what?
5. Has my child completed all required work to date? What is he or she missing? Can the work be made up?
6. What tools are being used to prepare my child for the standardized tests? How can we build on this at home? Do you think my child will meet the academic standards necessary for promotion in June?
7. What services are available in the school to help my child? What other resources are available? What can I do to help?

\$ales Tax Holiday

The 11th annual Iowa Sales Tax Holiday on select clothing and footwear will be held on Friday, Aug. 5, and Saturday, Aug. 6, 2011. **Pay no sales tax on selected clothing and footwear!!**

For more information about this statewide two-day sales tax holiday, visit:

<http://www.iowa.gov/tax/educate/STHflier.pdf>

