



**CHRISTIE MCGUIRE**

IFAPA Peer Liaison

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**I UNDERSTAND...  
I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO**

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!

## Fidget to Focus

### What Is a Fidget?

Experts believe that engaging in an activity that uses a sense other than what's required for your primary task — listening to music while reading a social studies textbook, for example — can enhance focus and improve performance in children with attention deficit disorder. These secondary tasks are called **fidgets** — mindless activities you can do while working on a primary task.

1. **Walk and Talk:** When your ADHD child gets restless and tunes out an important conversation, try walking and talking. Any non-strenuous activity, like playing catch or doing a jigsaw puzzle together, will also work. This is a powerful strategy for talking over your child's day or talking about an important matter.
2. **Stand Up and Move Around:** Talk with the teacher about small school accommodations like letting your child stand, when appropriate, during the school day. A child can do this discreetly at the back of the room or at his desk.
3. **Use Colored Pencils and Pens;** This fidget works well when your child needs to complete an assignment or read for comprehension (he can underline words as he reads). Scented markers may also help.
4. **Busy His Hands:** This facilitates focus when a child is listening, talking, or thinking about how to answer a tough essay question. Fidget toys for school or home include cool-looking pens or pencils, beaded bracelets, paper clips, and clothes with interesting textures or doodads.
5. **Tune In:** Plugging into an MP3 player helps children stay on task when studying, reading, exercising, or even going to sleep. Choose music that is appropriate to the task: a stimulating beat when exercising, calming tunes for sleep, and something in between when studying or reading.
6. **Chew Gum:** This helps your child when he has to concentrate for an extended period—doing homework or taking a test. If gum is not an option, sucking on a lemon drop or other hard candy will also do the trick.
7. **Go Ahead, Doodle:** A creative learning trick is to encourage your child to draw or write words or numbers when listening to a teacher's lecture.

Adapted from Additude magazine

# NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

## Support Group Happenings

### NCIFAPA Support Group

- \*"Questions You Were Always Afraid To Ask", Natalie Clapp, DHS
- \*Tues., November 18, at DHS Liberty Room, Mason City
- \* 6:30 pm Social Time and Snacks, Training 7-9 pm(2 hrs credit)
- \*Note this is a date change due to Veterans Day events!
- \* This is a great opportunity to get your questions answered!!

### HHWW Foster/Adoptive Parent Support Group

- \*Wed, Nov. 12th @ Hamilton Co. Extension Office
- \*5:30- Meal (RSVP number attending to Julie by Nov. 11th)
- \*6-8 training "Just a Bite:Managing Food Allergies!" by Holly Van Heel (2 hours credit)
- \*Childcare is available
- \*Contact Julie Schroeder for more information at 515-291-3029

### Ames Foster/Adoptive Support Group

- \* Thurs., Nov. 13th, 6-8 pm
- \* Cornerstone Church-56829 US HWY 30-Ames (note this is the NEW LOCATION)
- \*Childcare WILL NOT be offered at this meeting
- \*"Handling a Behavior Crisis"- Dr. Warren Phillips, 2 hours of credit
- \*Contact Christie McGuire for more information at 855-929-2005

### Fort Dodge Lunch and Learn

- \* Next meeting will be in Thursday, November 20th, 11:30-1:00
- \* Grace Lutheran Church, South 9th Street, Fort Dodge
- \*Training:" Pediatric Integrated Health Care", by Jamie Ferguson
- \*Contact Julie Schroeder for more information at 515-291-3029.

### MARSHALL COUNTY SUPPORT GROUP

- \*New Hope Christian Church-3901 S. Center, Marshalltown
- \*Tues. Nov. 11, 6-8 pm (NO DECEMBER MEETING)
- \* "Placement Preferences"-Bambi Schrader-2 hrs credit
- \* Contact Mindy Speake for more information at 515-291-1292.
- \*Child care is offered-donations accepted.

## FALL TIDBITS

Please note my email address is changing:  
[cmcguire@ifapa.org](mailto:cmcguire@ifapa.org)

## November Activities

November is National Adoption Month. Adoption Day events will be going on around the state. Congratulations to all families finalizing their adoptions during this special event!

## Friends of Children in Foster Care has funds through a special grant.

These grants will be available for up to \$300 per youth. For details and to fill out the Friends Application go to [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

## IFAPA TRAININGS

Remember no trainings are scheduled for the month of December so please plan ahead. Sign up for IFAPA trainings at [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

## Touching Base

I will be checking in with each of my families quarterly by mail, email, or phone calls. Can't wait to chat!

