

# NEWS FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON

July, 2016



**JOHN SMITH**

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!



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

Dear Parents,

It has been so dog gone hot here that getting kids up in the morning and then outside for the day has been a real chore! Especially when toying with their phone or camping on the couch and watching TV is so much easier. This is a battle which I sometimes wonder is worth the stress it causes me. But, I know that an excess amount of time in front of screens is bad for kids.

I read a study that tells how all of these smartphones, tablets, televisions, and computers are affecting kids. After just 30 minutes of screen time a day, researchers saw that children's grades began a steady decline. After two hours of it, researchers observed a dramatic drop in grades, and after four hours a day, the average GPA fell an entire grade level. This effect was seen particularly in middle schoolers, who weren't able to achieve A's in mathematics or English language arts after four hours of screen time. Plus, all of that time spent consuming media led children to have trouble falling asleep — those who spent four hours of screen time a day took an average of 20 minutes longer to fall asleep than children who had more limited screen time. More time on devices also led to increased social-emotional volatility in kids.

From my readings, I was aware that the average child spends eight hours in front of a screen, but I really didn't associate those numbers with my own foster children or grandchildren. Those numbers were about someone else's kids!

But I think the thing that jumped out at me most in my readings is that researchers found that the ability to perform a strenuous or difficult task without giving up decreased as their screen times increased. When children had limited screen time and were given chores to do, they performed better academically, socially and emotionally. Household tasks can make children feel a sense of self-worth and responsibility.

I don't know that any kids think, less screen time and more chores makes them happier, but I think at that Smith house we may give it a try 😊

Take Care & God Bless – IFAPA John

## DATES ON DECK

Saturday, July 23 (9AM-12:15PM) **Responding to Cultural Differences: What's a Parent to Do?**; at Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, Iowa.

Saturday, July 23 (1:15PM-4:30PM) **Managing the Short and Long-Term Effects of Child Sexual Abuse**; at Briar Cliff University, Sioux City, Iowa.

*(Check the IFAPA website [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org) and go to trainings, or contact me if you need info about any classes or available trainings)*

\*\*And, don't forget, if it has been three years since you last took an approved **CPR & First Aid** training or five years since you took your **Mandatory Child Abuse** training, you will need to complete these before you can be re-licensed. If you can't remember, touch base with your IKN or DHS licensing workers; they will know!

**ADVENTURELAND TICKETS** – Think about joining us for IFAPA's Appreciation Day on Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>! Tickets are \$23 and available from IFAPA.

## FOSTER PARENT MILESTONES

Please join me in thanking the following foster parents for their years of service to Iowa's children, as this month marks their renewal anniversary. Thank you for your years of dedication!

- **20+ Years:** Louann & Ron Mowrey; Ann & Eugene Katzer; John & Cheryl Kelly
- **10+ Years:** John & JoDena Elkin; Susan & Paul Iverson; Jeff & Marlene Kalvig
- **5+ Years:** Sherise Gibson & Thomas Ellis; Melanie & Clyde Farmer
- **ONE YEAR:** Marvin & Bernita Hartman; Amy & Chris Hilleshiem; Jon & Cindy King

**AND REMEMBER:** *I am just an email/phone call away. I am here for you! If you ever have a question, concern or celebration, give me a call. The conversations which I have with other parents are the best part of my day!*  
**-IFAPA John**

"Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children." ~Charles Swindoll, pastor, author and educator



## From My Side of the Desk!

What a start to summer! Heat and very little rain is more than I bargained for.

I always figure that when the 4<sup>th</sup> of July arrives that summer is half over. It is time to get the bucket list of summer plans out and start crossing off the ones that we aren't going to be able to get to.

And, maybe I shouldn't have let Mrs. Smith proof my front page. She reminded me that a number of years ago we had read The Bernstein Bears and Too Much TV for our boys.

She said that my note to you guys reminded her of that story. (If you aren't familiar with "The Bernstein Bears", you should be!). Anyway in the story, Mama Bear decides her family is spending too much time in front of the TV, so she bans it for a week. Then the Bear family finds other ways to have fun and keep busy, so they watch less when TV is allowed again—and they don't even miss it. ALL except Papa Bear, he couldn't handle the withdrawal and would find a way to sneak peaks at the TV. She said that I was the same way!

So I guess my message to you should be "Do as I say/suggest and not as I do".

Summer is going quickly, make some memories!

**-IFAPA John**