

NEWS FROM YOUR 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

Greetings! I hope summer is finding you and your family healthy and happy!

If you're like my household, you can barely keep the siblings in your own home connected, let alone siblings living in different homes and with different schedules. It's time to look at some creative options for giving bio siblings time together without taxing an already overtaxed schedule!

These are merely suggestions to get your own creative juices flowing, given what you have to work with in your area, within your logistical constraints, and of course specific to the ages of the children. (Obviously, if you live two hours away from the bio siblings, some of these ideas will not work as well).

Begin by thinking about some of the things your kids do and will be doing ANYWAY, such as going to daycare or camp! If kids are the right ages, collaborating with foster/adoptive/bio parents of bio siblings to get kids enrolled in the same day camp or daycare can be just the ticket for allowing the kids additional, low-pressure time together!

And, by low-pressure, I am referring to the pressure kids sometimes feel when there are scheduled, formal interactions with siblings and they are just expected to jump right in, get along, interact, and MAKE IT GOOD because this is your INTERACTION TIME and you only have ONE HOUR! Yikes. Way to promote fun and bonding....

Let's see....what other ideas do we have up our creative sleeves? Again depending on ages of kids, what about having them spend time together at library story time? If they are shy and a little younger and take a little longer to warm up each time, maybe this is just the ticket – they can exist at the same activity at the same time and have a little bit of warm-up time before maybe going out to the park to play for a while.

With older kids, how about signing them up for the same Boy Scout troop? Again...time together doing things they enjoy and would've been doing anyway. Or put them on the same summer softball league or put them in swimming lessons together. Enroll them at the same dance studio, for tumbling or hip-hop! Even if they aren't in the same class, they'll see each other at the studio, be in the same parades and recitals together, and know some of the same friends!

What about having older kids volunteer together (with adult supervision, of course) at the local animal shelter, walking dogs out in the yard. Give them something to work together on. This will be awesome bonding time, will take off some of that IT'S INTERACTION TIME, SO INTERACT!!!! pressure off of everyone and can be their special project.

For kids who live a significant distance away from bio siblings, consider enrolling kids near in age at the same overnight camp, where they can spend a week together but with activities and around other kids to take some of the pressure off of their particular interaction.

I simply cannot wait to hear some of your ideas! Either ideas you have already tried, or ones you are planning to try! Let's put our heads together and brainstorm to give our kiddos some really awesome, low-pressure sibling time!

Have you ordered your Adventureland tickets yet? Adventureland Day is Saturday, August 23, and tickets are on sale now! We hope to see you there!

www.ifapa.org (events tab)

NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

Kids and choices

Adulthood consists of one choice after another. Making good decisions is linked directly to the development of responsibility. Therefore, a child who is told what to do all the time never has the chance to test her/his ability to make informed choices... Here is one "choice building" idea... Instead of always having to assign chores to kids, make a list of everything that needs to be done, call a family meeting and decide as a team who will be responsible for each task. Involving kids in the process, making them part of the team, creates a sense of personal value and gives them practical experience at problem solving!

Healthy Summer Treats

By: Christina Bartlett

June 2014 issue of *Parenting Special Needs Magazine*

Summer is officially here. Kids are out of school and it's time for families to spend more time together. As we all know, social gatherings usually revolve around food. This can be the perfect opportunity to have new, healthy, foods available for family and guests.

Get your family involved in picking out new recipes and preparing them with you. When you include your children in this process, it should lead to them trying and hopefully enjoying new foods and their preparation.

Here are some easy tips for recipes that can be made all summer long. You may never have the same bite twice.

Fresh fruit kabobs with low fat yogurt dip. Have a variety of fruits and flavors of yogurt available so you can make wonderful treats. Choose fruits that are in season. They'll taste the best and usually have the lowest price tag!

Vegetable kabobs with dip. You can either have your vegetables grilled or raw. Allow your family and guests to choose from a variety of vegetables and dips. Dips can be made from plain, low fat yogurt with added flavors or you can use hummus and different spices.

Smoothies and smoothie pops. Choose fresh or frozen fruit, 1% or less milk, a splash of 100% fruit juice and low fat yogurt. Add ice if not using frozen fruit. Either make a few smoothie servings for everyone or freeze small containers with your tasty concoction. Don't forget the Popsicle sticks!

Salsas. Making home-made salsa can be fun using different fruits and vegetables. You can combine fruits and vegetables in one salsa or just make one with fruits or vegetables. Salsas can be eaten with tortilla chips, whole grain crackers, pita chips, or even to top your favorite fish, chicken or shrimp recipe.

Homemade, grilled pizza. Summertime is great for grilling foods. Why not try pizza? Purchase your favorite pizza dough or make your own. Make sure to include a lot of summer vegetables to top the pizza. Vary the sauces you use to achieve different flavors, such as pesto sauce, or marinara sauce. You can even add some grilled chicken to the pizza. Everyone loves pizza with a personal twist.

Kabobs on the grill are an excellent way to get your family to eat fruit and vegetables. You can add pineapple, peaches, peppers, tomatoes, zucchini, squash or any other fruit or vegetable. Don't forget to experiment with different sources of lean protein such as shrimp, chicken, beef, pork or fish.

Having a variety of salads on the side of your main dish can be helpful to you and your family. Get creative when making salads by using different kinds of salad greens, vegetables, fruit, beans, nuts, seeds, pastas and low fat dressings.

Get creative with the variety of summer fruits and vegetables available, even for the picky eaters. This can be the perfect opportunity to start instilling good eating habits in both you and your family.

SUPPORT-GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Are you providing care for a grandchild, niece or nephew, or other child of family or kin? If so, there's a support group especially for you!

The Kinship Care Support Group meets year-round, every third Thursday, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Tri-B Farms, 8600 NW 16th St., Ankeny.

Childcare/horseback riding are offered, as well as a meal, so adults AND children are making connections and having a great time!

Contact Regina Johnson – Iowa KidsNet/Four Oaks, at 515-422-1690 or rjohnson@fouroaks.org