Our parent agency, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, has spent the past year focusing on the topic of Trauma Informed Care in our publication, Partners. As a tie into that publication, you will find a wealth of information regarding the topic of trauma informed care.

In this edition of Fostering Across Wisconsin, we will discuss the impact of trauma and emphasize the importance of self-care; particularly during the holiday season.

Holidays provide foster parents with a tremendous opportunity of creating lasting memories, carrying on family traditions, and reinforcing family connections. However, it is important to be aware that holidays can trigger an array of complicated feelings and conflicting emotional reactions.

Many youth in foster care and youth who have been adopted, have experienced some form of trauma. Childhood trauma is a complex and emotionally charged issue. As a result, youth who have been exposed to trauma, tend to respond by exhibiting challenging behaviors.

There are a variety of triggers that can cause emotional stress for youth. Sometimes, we know what those triggers are and other times, we were not aware of what the specific triggers were, and there are times in which we will never be fully aware of what was the trigger.

Being aware of and prepared for the wide range of potential emotional reactions to the holidays will be beneficial for you, your family, youth in care, and birth parents.

Youth in care need your patience and support to help them mitigate these emotionally charged times. You have the ability to reinforce all of the positive experiences that the holiday season embodies.
Self Care and the Holidays

Self-care is an important lifelong parenting skill. Self-care becomes even more essential during the holiday season. The holidays can trigger a wide variety of emotional reactions and behaviors for children and youth living in foster care.

In order to be the best parent you can possibly be, you need to ensure that you are taking care of yourself. Our lives are busy and being a parent is demanding. As a result, it is vital to take care of your needs so that you can be there to meet the needs of the children entrusted to your care.

The following are some suggestions for you to consider:

Enjoy all that life has to offer. Make time to enjoy your hobbies and interests:

- Writing
- Reading
- Scrapbooking
- Painting
- Week-end getaway
- Exercising
- Photography
- Go to the movies
- Practice yoga
- Gardening
- Play Your favorite sport
- Go for a walk

- Listen to relaxing music
- Don’t forget to laugh early and often (Remember that old adage, Laughter is the best medicine!)
- Seek out support from others:
  - Talk to your Foster Care Coordinator
  - Talk to your on-going social worker
  - Attend a support group
  - Attend a training
  - Talk to your partner
  - Talk to family and friends
  - Call the Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center: 1-800-947-8074. We are here for you!

Celebrate and Honor Holiday Traditions:

- Develop positive relationships with the child’s birth family.
- Honor established traditions and create new ones.
- Encourage enriching connections between children and their families.
- Capture the cherished memories by providing children with a camera on their home visits.
- Work together to create a holiday keepsake photo album.
- Encourage phone calls and contacts during the holidays and throughout the year.
Changes to Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting

Over the past few years the foster care program in Wisconsin has undergone a number of changes including how foster care rates are determined for each child.

The Division of Safety and Permanence is committed to evaluating the entire Levels of Care initiative to continue to improve service provision and support to children and families, to monitor the expected outcomes of the initiative, and to make adjustments and modifications when necessary.

As a part of the evaluation modifications were recently made to the Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting policy. See DSP Memo Series 2012-11:

dcf.wisconsin.gov/memos/num_memos/DSP/2012/2012-11.pdf

The changes include:

**Integrating the final changes to Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code:**
- Involving team members and licensing agency involvement in the rate setting process.
- The rate setters' responsibilities.

**Levels of Care Evaluation:**
- Clarification for allowable costs and uses of the Exceptional Portion of the foster care rate.
- Creation of a process to manage complaints and monitoring of the rate setting process.
- Modification to the Level of Need algorithm.
- Implements an increase of the multiplier of the Supplemental Point Value to $8.00.

The changes are effective for new placements on or after November 5, 2012 and at the six month rate re-determinations.

The change in the multiplier for the Supplemental Point value may not change the overall foster care rate for a child, but rather the proportion of the rate that is covered by the Supplemental Points with a decrease to the Exceptional portion of the rate.
Resources

Links to our 2012 Partners Newsletters that Focus on Trauma
- Fall: Trauma Informed Care Stories from Families
- Summer: Emerging Therapies for Trauma Informed Care
- Spring: An Introduction to Trauma Informed Care

Go to: wiadopt.org/Resources/ARWNewsletters.aspx

Books and DVDs from the Lending Library
Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential and Endangered, by B. Perry and M. Szalahvitz. This book is an exploration of how the brain learns to bond with others—and a call to help our children.

The Brain: Effects of Childhood Trauma, by Bruce Perry (DVD).

The Legacy of Childhood Trauma: Not Always Who They Seem, by Echo Bridge Productions (DVD). This video focuses on the connection between so-called “delinquent youth” and the experience of childhood trauma. The video features the stories of four young adults who are survivors of childhood trauma.

Child Trauma Handbook: A Guide For Helping Trauma Exposed Children, by Ricky Greenwald. This no-nonsense manual helps the reader understand how and why kids’ behaviors can be related to their history of trauma, while also teaching practical hands-on clinical skills and interventions.

Self Care Resources
Foster Parenting Toolbox by Kim Phagan-Hansel, which has a chapter on support.

A Guide to Foster Parenting: Everything but the Kids. Mary Goodearl and her husband have nine children—three of whom were adopted from the foster care system. She is a former social worker for Outagamie County, and she also worked for the State of Wisconsin as an adoption facilitator.

Mary says that foster parents require much more than good parenting skills to achieve success in today’s foster care climate.

Tipsheets:
- Helping Children in Care Build Relationships
- What’s Behind These Behaviors?
- The Journey of Forgiveness: How to Teach Your Children
- Working with Children Who Have Been Traumatized
- The Balance Beam of Life: Caring for Yourself, While Caring for Your Kids
- Stressed Out!
- The Journey of Forgiveness: Learning to Live a Life of Forgiveness
- Reaching Your Boiling Point
- The Emotional Journey of Relative Caregiving
- Self Care for Families

FAPA provides spring and fall conferences, as well as an extensive website, newsletter, and network of supportive WFAPA members and other foster parents who can be a resource for you.

The Spring 2013 conference is focusing on Allegations and will be held April 12-14, 2013 at the Blue Harbor Resort & Spa.

For more information, go to: http://wfapa.org
Being an Effective Advocate For Your Child
Presented by WI FACETS

Thursday, January 17
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Cost $10/person

Via webinar or in person at:
ARW
6682 West Greenfield, Suite 310
Milwaukee, WI 53214
Register online at:
http://www.advocate2012.eventbrite.com

Join ARW in welcoming Wisconsin FACETS: Family Assistance Center for Education Training and Support.

This training will focus on IEPs and special education. Learn how to be informed and prepared to advocate for your children in their schools.

This training will help you know your role and rights as your child’s advocate. Participants will learn strategies including being direct, confident, and under control in advocacy.

WI FACETS was founded in June 1995 by a small group of parents who had a strong desire to help other families understand the special education laws and systems.

Learn how to advocate for your child as well as work with their educational providers.

Register at:
www.advocate2012.eventbrite.com

Or contact: Rachel Goeden at 414-475-1246
or goeden@wiadopt.org

ARW Adoption Resources of Wisconsin
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In partnership with

wisconsin department of children & families

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Introduction to Life Books
February 12, 2013
6:00-8:00 p.m.
Cost: $10
at:
Adoption Resources of Wisconsin
6682 West Greenfield Avenue Suite 310
Milwaukee WI 53214
Register online at:
http://lifebooks.eventbrite.com

Life books provide foster and adoptive youth with personal connections to their past. A life book is much more than a scrap book or a baby book. A life book is a personal account of a child's life to help fill in the holes from their past.

Foster and adoptive parents play an important role in providing support in creating life books as well as in using the life book as a healing tool.

Creating a life book may feel like an overwhelming task because you don't have enough information or personal items to include in your child's life book. Come find out more about inventive ways to create life books and how to overcome hurdles that may come up in the process.

After this introductory training, please join us for our Life books Workshop on February 23rd 2013 from 9am-12pm to start or continue your life books.

Leann Meiners is a lead program specialist for ARW and has worked with adoptive and foster families for the past nine years. She has her masters in social work from UW-Milwaukee and has answered thousands of phone calls, emails and questions from families in Wisconsin throughout their adoption journey. Leann's warmth and understanding make her a natural with parents.

Mai Her-Lee is a resource specialist for ARW. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from UW-Madison in 2004 and has had experience working with children and families of diverse backgrounds.

Since 2005, she has provided services to many birth, foster, and adoptive children and families in the Milwaukee area as well as throughout the state of Wisconsin in her previous roles as a family case manager for Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services, and as a recruitment specialist for ARW.
Life Book Workshop
February 23, 2013 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.
Cost: Free!

Adoption Resources of Wisconsin
6682 West Greenfield Avenue Suite 310
Milwaukee WI 53214
Register online at:
http://lifebooksworkshop.eventbrite.com

Don't know where to start on your Life Books?
Want to start yours or continue it in the company of other foster/adoptive parents?

For more information, call us at 800.762-8063

Enjoy tips, conversation and community at our Life Books Workshop.

Bring all your life book supplies for a morning of creating a true treasure for your family.

Scrap book experts and enthusiasts will be on site to answer questions and assist with the assembly of pages.

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