

The Foster Network

February / March 2014



CFS Contacts

RRS Info Line.....	654-3220
Foster Parent Social Worker	654-5581
Licensing.....	654-3456
Placement... 289-3211 / 654-3211	
Adoptions.....	654-3210
Youth Services Division	289-1983
Rx for Kids Public Health Program.....	981-5373
Children's Health Prevention Nurse.....	654-5536
General Information Emergency Response Units	654-3444
General Information Ongoing Units.....	240-2700
General Information East County	955-2290
General Information Central Programs	654-3405
Children's Services Auxiliary Liaison	654-3245
Field Based Case Aides	654-3441 / 289-1989
ILP Coordinator	289-1982

Spotlight on...

Intensive Treatment Foster Care

We are seeking seasoned, highly trained foster families to consider becoming ITFC foster homes. Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) is a specialized short-term placement designed to allow youth with special therapeutic needs to step-down from a group home and receive the care they need in a family setting. Every child needs a family yet many of our dependent youth continue to live in group homes or residential facilities and experience frequent moves and unstable placements.

ITFC homes provide individualized attention to youth, allowing for more focus on the services and interventions needed to help decrease symptoms of trauma that often impact placement stability. ITFC homes are provided therapeutic services, in home behavioral support, psychiatric assessment and treatment, around the clock emergency response, and additional training and support services. Families are also reimbursed at a higher rate due to the increased participation and support they provide to youth. This short term, therapeutic placement prepares the child for the transition from group home care into a general use foster home. CFS has partnered with two agencies, Aspiranet and Casa Pacifica, to provide training and support. Aspiranet will be hosting an orientation on February 24, 2014 from 6-8 p.m. at 1838 Eastman Ave, Suite 100, Ventura, CA 93003. RSVP to scasey@aspiranet.org or (805) 289-0120. Families interested in learning more about becoming ITFC homes can visit <http://www.aspiranet.org/program-services/intensive-treatment-foster-care> or http://www.casapacifica.org/programs_services/foster_parenting for more information. You can also contact Angelina at angelina.mccormick-soll@ventura.org.

Strengthening Families: New Therapeutic Visitation Center

We are very excited to announce the creation of our therapeutic visitation center in collaboration with Kids & Families Together (K&FT). The visitation center is located at 4601 Telephone Road, Suite 117, Ventura, CA 93003 and is an extension of our Relational Assessment Program (RAP). Therapists will now meet with families working towards reunification in this new setting. Typically, visitation and treatment were separate activities. The therapeutic visitation center will now allow us to maximize the use of our resources, while simultaneously providing needed services to our families.

Our "soft opening" took place in mid-January. During this time, existing RAP families will meet at the visitation center. Services include: assessment, parenting classes, therapeutic family support, individual parent treatment and joint child/parent therapy. In addition, a Family Center Component will be added to provide community resource information and workshops. We are proud of the collaboration that went into the progressive development of this program. This multi-disciplinary, strength-based approach will help us to create stronger partnerships with our families. We are committed to finding new ways to align our resources, services and practices in our pursuit of "Protecting Children by Strengthening Families."

What's Goin' On?

Baby Sign Language Series

Every Wednesday in February
(5, 12, 19, and 26) 9 – 11 a.m.
2080 Winifred St, Simi Valley
(Cornerstone Church)

This class will teach foster parents to use sign language & improve communication. RSVP: jason_lee5@vcccd.edu.

Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors: What's Natural & Healthy

February 18, Webinar 12 – 1 p.m.
Register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7999884231902792705>

Foster Parent Networking

February 20, 10 a.m. – 12 noon
E.P. Foster Library, 651 E. Main St,
Ventura (Topping Room)

An opportunity to receive updated information as to changes related to foster care and network with other foster parents who are geographically related. RSVP to DebbieFlowers@vcccd.edu

CASA of Ventura County Explores Fetal Alcohol Disorders

February 20, 6 – 8 p.m.

Neuropsychologist Dr. Ann Simun, PsyD Takes a Look at Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) at this free two-hour training. For more information and to register, contact Bernadette@casaofventuracounty.org or call (805) 389-3120

Practical Parenting vs. Foster Parenting

February 27, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Moorpark College CDC

There can be a fine line between what is practical and what is appropriate in a foster home setting. Please RSVP to Wendy Homan at homanwendy@aol.com

Skills Practice for Collaborative Problem Solving

March 4, 2014 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Casa Pacifica 975 Flynn Rd
Camarillo, 93012

Register at <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/skills-practice-for-collaborative-problem-solving-tickets-6838384793?aff=eorg>

'Tis the Season...for Taxes

Foster families who have had a child placed in their home for over 6 months are able to claim these children on their annual income tax returns. Foster parents are asked to complete the top portion of the "Information for Income Tax Purposes" form in order for Suria to verify the length of stay in your home and provide child's confidential information. The form is available on our website at http://vcportal.ventura.org/hsa/docs/brochures/pdf/2013_IncomeTaxInfo.pdf or by contacting Suria at (805) 654-5581 or at suria.gottesman@ventura.org.

Families that earned under \$52,000 in 2013, are eligible to have your taxes completed and e-filed for FREE at an Earn It! Keep It! Save It! VITA location. Locations are across the county. Call 2-1-1 to schedule an appointment and visit <https://vcunitedway.org/uncategorized/earn-it-keep-it-save-it-free-2012-tax-preparation-electronic-filing-offered-to-low-moderate-income-earners> for more info.



Moment of Inspiration



Inspire our Board of Supervisors with your foster care success stories! Because they realize the dedication of our foster parents, the Board of Supervisors has set aside time during their first meeting of the month to hear foster care success stories. If you are interested in sharing your story, please contact Angelina at angelina.mccormick-soll@ventura.org or (805) 654-5582.

Hope 4 Kids Festival & Run

Bring your friends!! The Hope 4 Kids event is a community fundraiser and awareness event to support the foster community. Funds raised go directly to foster youth and families to provide enrichment opportunities that support healthy development, community engagement, and important social opportunities. Join CFS and community partners at this year's event held on March 15, 2014 at Cal Lutheran University. Please visit <http://www.hope4kids.myevent.com> to learn more and to register for this fun and important event!



Another important aspect to the Hope 4 Kids event is the inclusion of the Ventura County Heart Gallery. This year, Children & Family Services has organized a Heart Gallery album that will allow families interested in adoption to privately learn more about children seeking forever homes.



Please also remember that all foster children are entitled to confidentiality. If you do attend the event, refrain from providing any information about a child in the gallery who may have been, or is currently, in your home out of respect for the child and his/her rights.

Best Practice Update – 7 Day Notices

CFS strives to establish and implement best practices that support quality care for children and their families. In an effort to understand and address the use of 7 day notices, foster parents will be asked to meet with a member of our team once the notice has been given. This will allow us to have a conversation about the issues that have led to the 7 day notice, as well as work collaboratively to problem solve how we can decrease placement disruptions that can add to the trauma our foster children have been through.

Pre-Placement Questions

What do you need to know about the new child in your care? You have a right and responsibility to ask the ER worker about the child's health, limitations, and behavior. While some information may not be known at the time of placement, our pre-placement question resource will guide you in gathering the information that you need to know about the child in your care. This form should be completed by the placing social worker if the needs and services plan is not provided to you. RRS encourages you to have a few copies of the form on hand so that you can request that it be completed in lieu of the needs and services plan.

Not sure who your child's social worker is?

We know that in the first days of a new placement it can be hard to figure out who the assigned social worker is. When in doubt, please call the Ongoing Unit at (805) 240-2700 and ask for the Officer of the Day. Ask the Officer of the Day to look up the case assignment. They should be able to assist you and provide contact information for your assigned worker or a supervisor holding the case until your worker has been assigned.

Taking Care of Our Foster Parents

CFS is excited to inform you that we have increased the number of respite care hours available to our eligible foster parents! Respite care is a critical resource provided by Channel Islands Social Services designed to allow for foster parents to take care of themselves! Ventura County Foster parents are eligible for up to 12 hours of respite care per month and we encourage you to use this time to participate in self-care activities that will "refill" your tanks and enable you to continue to provide quality care. Contact Suria at (805) 654-5581 or suria.gottesman@ventura.org for more information or to be referred.

Foster Care Snapshot: The Critical Need Continues...

In the Month of December:

- A total of 1,208 cases were open with CFS in the month of December
- 71 new children were taken into care involving 40 families
- Of the 283 foster homes we had, only 47 had openings with a total of 64 open beds
- We welcomed 4 new foster homes into the CFS family

Please help us spread the word about the need for quality foster homes! Remember, foster parents are eligible to receive an incentive of \$100 for referring a family once they complete the licensing process and an additional \$100 once a child is placed in the new foster family's home! Contact Victoria at (805) 654-3220 for more info!

Vacancy Updates

If a child is moved from your home and you have an open bed, please contact one of our placement coordinators so they can work quickly to have another child placed in your home. Contact Kristin at (805) 289-1908 or Ruby at (805) 654-3211.

What's Goin' On? continued...

Behavior Strategies for Parents of Children with Autism

March 5, 6 – 8 p.m.

5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo
Santa Paula Room

Register at <http://workshops.vcoe.org>
or e-mail brush@vcoe.org

Carpe Diem Conference

For parents and professionals who
care about children and youth with
emotional challenges

March 7, 8 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Register: www.venturacountyselpa.com

Baby Basics & Beyond

March 10, 7 – 9 p.m. Mariana
Abarta's (RSVP for directions
please)

Participants will identify variations
on those needs depending on the
special needs of the at-risk infant.

RSVP to Jason_lee5@vcccd.edu

Hands Free Parenting

March 12, 9 – 11 a.m. Location TBD
Contact Jason Lee at Jason_lee5@vcccd.edu
for more information and
location.

Foster Parent Networking

March 14, 9 – 11 a.m.

2080 Winifred St, Simi Valley
(Cornerstone Church)

An opportunity to receive updated
information as to changes related
to foster care and network with
other foster parents who are
geographically related. RSVP to
Wendy Homan at homanwendy@aol.com

Rx for Kids Presents: Caring for Drug Exposed Infant

March 18

Contact Debbie Flowers at
DebbieFlowers@vcccd.edu or
(805) 986-5800 x2018 for time,
location, and RSVP

VCFPA Presents: Concurrent Planning, Visitation & Relative Care Giving

March 20, 7 – 9 p.m.

Living Oaks Christian Church,
Student Center, 1077 Business
Center Dr, Newbury Park

Free childcare provided by
Channel Islands Social Services by
contacting them directly at
(805) 384-0983

What's Goin' On? continued...

Building a Successful Team

March 27, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Moorpark College CDC

In this class we will define all of the individuals who are directly involved in the case plan.

RSVP to jason_lee5@vcccd.edu

Fostering Attachments

Begins Thursday April 3 and on April 10 & 24 and ends May 1.

(No session on April 17)

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Kids & Families Together

856 E Thompson Blvd, Ventura

This series, led by Faith Friedlander, MFT, will guide you in the process of understanding how your personal attachment history influences your parenting and learn how to engage in Theraplay®. Please RSVP to Melana Luke at mluke@kidsandfamilies.org, call (805) 643-1446 x116 or Rhonda Carlson at rcarlson@vcccd.edu

Caring for Kids with Trauma

March 29, 9 – 11 a.m.

Location TBD

Have you ever cared for a child whose strong emotions, anger or overreactions caused you stress?

This training led by Yolande Brizendine, MSW, will describe what may be happening inside the mind of a child who has been through major trauma, abuse or abandonment. RSVP to jason_lee5@vcccd.edu

Sharing Strategies from Non-Violent Crisis Intervention: A

Workshop for Parents & Caregivers

April 4, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

5100 Adolfo Rd, Camarillo

Register <http://workshops.vcoe.org>

CHDP presents: Caring for Medically Fragile Children

May 14, Contact Debbie Flowers

at DebbieFlowers@vcccd.edu or

(805) 986-5800 x2018 for time, location, and RSVP.

VCFPA General Membership

Meeting & Training

May 15, 7 – 9 p.m.

Living Oaks Christian Church,

Student Center, 1077 Business

Center Dr, Newbury Park

Free childcare provided by Channel

Islands Social Services - contact them directly at (805) 384-0983

Filling the Gaps: Additional Support!

RRS knows that it doesn't take long before your monthly reimbursement disappears! Here are some resources to help you fill in the gaps!

Children's Services Auxiliary: CSA partners with Children & Family Services to provide extra-curricular scholarships, additional clothing funds, computers, assistance with high school senior expenses, and many other kinds of support. Visit them at <http://www.csavc.org> or contact Jeannette Maxwell-McGowan at jeannette.maxwell-mcGowan@ventura.org for more information.

Cornerstone Church: Iris Braswell organizes East County Resources out of Cornerstone Church, Simi Valley. She often has clothing and other equipment for children ages 0-10. Please contact her for more information or to arrange a time to "shop" at john316simi@sbcglobal.net

Dark to Dawn: Dark to Dawn's Community of Friends ministry provides volunteers to connect with foster youth, and offers one-time financial assistance (housing, transportation, etc.) to youth who have "aged out" of foster care or are in "extended foster care." Learn more about Dark to Dawn at www.Facebook.com/DarktoDawn or by emailing John@DarktoDawn.org

Heart-to-Heart: Carrie McAuliffe organizes West County resources through Heart-to-Heart. Heart-to-Heart can provide clothing, toys, and other equipment, depending upon the resources and goods currently on hand. Contact Carrie for more information at mzzladybug@yahoo.com or (805) 500-3173.

James Store House: James Store House supports dependent youth by providing a range of goods to caregivers, including furniture and household items. If you have an unmet need, contact Jeannette Maxwell-McGowan at jeannette.maxwell-mcGowan@ventura.org for more information. Read more about James Store House at <http://jamesstorehouse.org>

Rachel's Closet: Rachel's Closet provides children's clothing and supplies free of charge. All items are provided free of charge so that we can help ensure that families and children have the essentials that they need to succeed. For more information about Rachel's Closet, please visit <http://www.vcfpa.com> or contact Lisa Pugh at lisa@vcfpa.com or at (805) 285-3790. To learn more about joining the VCFPA visit their website.

Childcare for Foster Children

Have you been looking for childcare resources for your foster child? Child Development Resources administers a range of childcare programs, as well as providing referrals to community child care providers. Foster children may receive priority assignment from the wait list and subsidies with verification from your social worker that the child is a court dependent minor. In order to apply, please complete the following steps:

1. Complete the Centralized Eligibility List Application, which can be downloaded here: https://www.childdevelopmentresources.org/TextPages/how_do_i_enroll.aspx
2. Provide the completed application to Jeannette Maxwell-McGowan at jeannette.maxwell-mcgowan@ventura.org or fax to (805) 654-3464. She will verify the child is a dependent minor and will submit the application packet, with the verification, to CDR directly.
3. Jeannette will follow up with you to confirm the application has been submitted and provide you the CDR contact information so that you are able to check the status of the application.

Social Media & Confidentiality

Social media is everywhere and many of us use it to stay in contact with loved ones. While social media is an important communication tool, it can also be tricky to navigate as a foster parent. Remember that your foster children are entitled to confidentiality. This means they have the right to not be identified as foster children or have their personal information posted. Please be mindful of this as you use your social media accounts. When in doubt, contact your child's social worker before posting anything about your foster child. For more information about foster youth and parent use of social media, visit https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/smtips_parent.pdf



College Bound?



College financial aid deadlines are rapidly approaching. Here are some important dates for you and your teen to keep in mind:

January 1, 2014 thru March 2, 2014: Priority Filing Deadline for Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for college bound students. <https://fafsa.ed.gov>

January 13, 2014 thru March 2, 2014: Cal State Channel Islands College Scholarship Application period. <http://www.csuci.edu/financialaid/oncampusscholarships.htm>

For more information on college or financial aid, contact Andrew Shlapak, ILP coordinator, at (805) 289-1982 or andrew.shlapak@ventura.org.

NAACP Saturday School

The Ventura County NAACP Saturday school Spring semester is enrolling African-American students, grades 1-12. Students are provided a positive learning experience focusing on the educational, social, cultural, and historical contributions of the African American community. For more information, contact: Cassandra Slay, Director (805) 660-6492 vcaturdayschool@hotmail.com or <https://sites.google.com/site/vcnaacpsat>

Kudos Corner

"I wanted to share that the toy store was such a wonderful experience as a caregiver. From the beginning point to the end, the process was organized. The volunteers were very helpful and patient with all patrons. My little one received a fabulous red fire truck, which he loves! He calls it his "car" often putting household items in the back to haul around the house. It's really funny to watch. He also received an Elmo doll, a blanket, cars, a book, and some sports gear that he will enjoy outside. Please extend my gratitude to the Children's Services Board and all it's donors for all their tireless efforts to make Christmas such a special time for children like my nephew who go through so many changes all at once. It really made a difference!"

- Relative Caregiver



Foster Parent On-line Training

Foster Care & Adoptive Community <http://fosterparents.com>

Department of Washington Social & Health Services
www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/onGoingVid.asp

Foster Parent College www.fosterparentcollege.com

Florida's Just in Time Training <http://jitfl.cbcs.usf.edu>

Foster Club www.fosterclub.com/booster/article/foster-parent-online-training

Useful Links

County of Ventura Foster Parents
www.vchsa.org/foster

Children's Services Auxiliary
www.csavc.org

CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocates
www.casaofventuracounty.org

Channel Islands Social Services
www.islandsocialservices.org

California Youth Connection
<http://calyouthconn.org>

Kids & Families Together
www.kidsandfamilies.org

VC Foster Parent Association
www.vcfpa.com

Dark to Dawn
www.darktodawn.org

Casa Pacifica
www.casapacifica.org

Interface Children & Family Services
<http://icfs.org>

Aspiranet
www.aspiranet.org

Arrow Child & Family Ministries
www.arrow.org

Koinonia Family Services
www.kfh.org

National Foster Parent Association
<http://nfpaonline.org>

TEACh Fund Scholarship
www.vccf.org/scholarship/tech/index.shtml

Ventura County Office of Education
Foster Care Services
www.vcoe.org/Portals/VcssoPortals/spes/usersdata/FYS%20Brochure.pdf

Neighborhoods for Learning
<http://first5ventura.org/parents-caregivers/neighborhoods-for-learning>