



## Volume 8, July 2020

Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare

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### Child Welfare Director's message

#### Dear foster parents and relative caregivers:

As we continue to navigate new and challenging times, I want to thank you for all that you do to support children and young adults placed in your home.

As we witness the injustices happening across our nation, we cannot continue to ignore the longstanding issues of racial inequities and institutional racism that are rooted in our history. As parents and caregivers, we must stand up for the children and young adults in our care and engage in conversations about race and racism and the trauma our black children and children of color may experience. We have added some resources to our online program page to help.

During COVID-19, we also have brought additional resources for caregivers. We have appreciated your grace and flexibility as we navigate changes.

Lastly, we have drafted a Child Welfare Vision for Transformation built on trauma-informed, family & community centered & culturally responsive programs. More information will be coming soon and we look forward to staying connected.

With gratitude,

Rebecca Jones Gaston

Child Welfare Director

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## Program Information

### Antiracism resources

We must recognize and understand the lived experiences of the children and families that we serve. We are including a list of resources [online](#) to help you navigate these very important conversations. These resources are intended to help identify where to start, how to respond and what to say. The intent is to support you in providing content to engage in conversations with children and young adults in your home, and support to you and your family in on-going learning.

We encourage you to take time to review the resources, track your time to receive credit toward your biennial caregiver training hours and provide recommendations for additional resources. Resource recommendations may be sent to [FosterFamily.Supports@dhs.oha.state.or.us](mailto:FosterFamily.Supports@dhs.oha.state.or.us)

### Resources during COVID-19

All of us have had to shift in different ways to stay safe during the pandemic. With these shifts, we have been able to communicate several different resources to caregivers and youth. Please stay up to date on the [DHS Child Welfare COVID-19 webpage](#).

Here is a list of some of those resources that are made available only during COVID-19/declared State of Emergency:

**Alternative Care Funding Support** This new funding is an additional reimbursement of up to \$375/month for circumstances in which alternative caregiving does not align with Foster Home Certification rule defined “child care”.

- If a foster parent/relative caregiver has necessary errands (grocery store, etc.) and pays an individual to care for the children
- If a foster parent/relative caregiver needs to help supervise/facilitate a meeting with a child’s therapist/parent/caseworker and needs help with other children in the home and pays an individual to care for the children
- If a foster parent/relative caregiver is working from home, utilized child care previously, and pays 17 year old neighbor to come to the home to care for the children while foster parent works

- If a foster parent/relative caregiver is assisting with distance learning requirements and utilizes an individual to help supervise children

The reimbursement must be approved by either your caseworker, certifier or a supervisor. A form will need to be completed with the name of the person who has been paid. That person will need to sign an invoice (provided by the department) that they were paid and the amount they received. Payments made during the month of April are eligible for reimbursement. The MAXIMUM amount to be reimbursed for Alternative Care is \$375 per month per child.

**One-time Personal Care Services Payment** During this public health challenge, foster parents will be eligible for a one-time personal care services payment when they have or are willing to care for children who:

1. Have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
2. Are symptomatic and have tested positive for COVID-19.
3. Are symptomatic and presumed positive by a healthcare provider when no testing is available.

**Pandemic EBT** Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) is additional food support for children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, including youth in care, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Caregivers of school-age youth in care will receive \$5.70 per child per day for every day schools were closed from March 16-June 30 to buy food. P-EBT benefits began issuance in June. Families will receive up to \$384 per eligible child on an Oregon Trail card to purchase groceries.

Not all foster students will not be eligible for P-EBT. Students must be enrolled in a qualified school to receive benefits. A full list can be found on the ODE website under [Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer](#).

This benefit (on an Oregon Trail card) will be automatically mailed to families whose children are enrolled and was receiving meals at a free or reduced price in a school participating in the National School Lunch Program. Students can still pick-up the to-go meals at schools and get P-EBT benefits. They do not have to choose between them. Oregon Trail Cards can be used to buy food at most grocery stores and farmers markets as well as Amazon and Wal-Mart. For more information about P-EBT and food benefits: <https://oralert.gov/benefits>

**MyNeighbOR** On March 22, 2020 Every Child launched a 36-county emergency response to needs of foster families and kids/youth in care. [My NeighbOR](#) is a decentralized effort designed to mobilize community assets that match needs expressed by foster families and youth in foster care.



Current tangible needs, such as groceries, educational activities, supplies, and more may be shared at

[www.everychildoregon.org/needs](http://www.everychildoregon.org/needs) by DHS employees, foster families, or youth in foster care (including those in the Independent Living Program).

**Chafee Housing Services** Chafee Housing now has extended service eligibility through age 22 (ends on 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday). The maximum monthly rate is \$1000.00 and the \$7000 lifetime maximum is waived. These changes end 9/30/2020.

**Bimonthly Calls with Independent Living Program (ILP) Providers and Youth** Regular twice a month calls to help keep youth in foster care accessing ILP services as well as their ILP Providers up to date.



**HOW TO COPE WITH STAYING HOME DURING COVID-19**

Here are some recommendations from our youth...

**WELLNESS ACTIVITIES**

Working out

- Walk your dog
- Go on a run/jogging
- Ride your bike
- Go on a hike
- Volleyball
- Basketball
- Yoga

Art

- Painting, Drawing, Molding, Embroidery, sewing

Board Games

- "The ones that make you laugh"
- Puzzle

Writing poetry

Music

- Sing, listen to music, dance

Relax

- Meditate
- Do a facemask

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Watch TV

- Netflix series and movies, Hulu, nature documentaries,...
- Examples: "Greys Anatomy, Shameless, Supernatural, Law and Order, Kingdom of the White Wolf, New Girl, Vampire Diaries, Impractical Jokers, Dr K.Vet"
- Youtube
- Example: "JennaJunlien Podcast" "Jennamarbles"
- Tic Tok

Talk to friend and family

- FaceTime or Video chats
- Phone call or text

Gaming

- Call of Duty, Minecraft, League of Legends

Reading

- Comic series on Webtoons - "the Gamer"
- Books
- Social Media

Research a topic and learn about it

- Do a science experiment

**OTHER**

Cleaning

- Reorganize your space
- Deep clean

Eating Cooking

Sleep

- Take naps
- Wake up at 6am

Enjoy the outdoors

- sit outside or play with your dog, drive around

Start online classes

- Do homework
- Learn how to write checks
- Do math

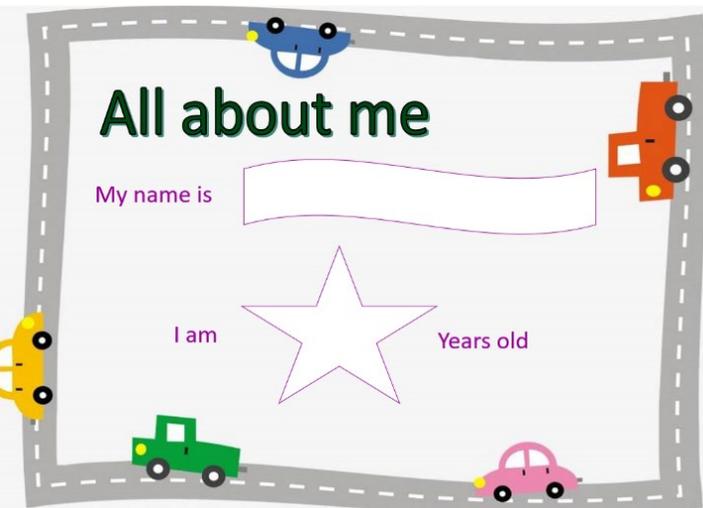
**Personal Outreach to Youth from the ILP Program** Our young adults are also struggling during this time, especially those who may not be eligible for services. The ILP program has researched and stayed apprised of resources available, talked with youth on the phone and have walked through processes on how to access services. Our partners at [FosterClub](#) and the [Oregon Foster Youth Connection](#) (OFYC) are making efforts to ensure that youth can connect and be supported so they do not feel so alone during social distancing.

We recognize there are other resources not on this list. Thank you to **all** of our local communities, agencies, and individuals who have come together to support one another.

### Staying Connected via Social Media

We know that staying connected is even more crucial during this time. If you haven't already, please find our [Oregon Foster or Adopt Facebook page](#)! You can search for us in the search banner bar @oregonfosteroradopt Here you will find us sharing updates, information, resources and supports. We look forward to connecting with you!

### All About Me Books



An exciting tool is coming your way! [All About Me Books](#) are a wonderful tool that anyone can use to help engage children and youth. It is exactly how it sounds, a book documenting a child's interests, feelings, and ultimately captures who they are and their journey. These books are simple and priceless. Through the use of templates, we engage children at their developmental level and customize books that they help create. These books capture a child's history, culture, and current interests and are a gift they will be able to cherish. Children use

these years from now to refresh their memories and build meaningful connections in the process. This tool has been proven to support attachment and permanency work for children and youth.

We are working on gathering templates and will be providing direction on how you can access this resource.

We thank you for your commitment to children and youth across Oregon and we are excited to partner with you as we pioneer this new resource.



Things that make me happy...



Stay tuned to learn more regarding All About Me books!

## Family Acceptance Project

We know that foster parents and relative caregivers want the children and young adults in their care to be well and thrive. As caregivers, it's sometimes hard to know for certain what makes the greatest impact. Thanks to research conducted by Dr. Caitlin Ryan of the [Family Acceptance Project](#), we have some of those answers. Dr. Ryan studied lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth and their families, examining specific caregiver behaviors and learned how a variety of caregiver behaviors affected the youth's risk for health and mental health concerns.

The study found that youth who are shown acceptance have better health, are less likely to be depressed and are three times less likely to think about and attempt suicide. Youth who are not accepted by their family have higher rates of suicidal thoughts and attempts, illegal drug use, depression and greater risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Below are some specific behaviors which are helpful and some which are harmful for LGBTQ youth from Dr. Ryan’s research study.

<b>Behaviors that Help</b>	<b>Behaviors that Hurt</b>
Bring your child to LGBTQ groups and events	Prevent your child from having an LGBTQ friend
Require other family members to treat your child with respect	Make your child leave the home because they are LGBTQ
Tell your LGBTQ/ Gender Diverse child you are proud of them	Tell your child that being LGBTQ is “just a phase”
Believe that your child can be a happy LGBTQ adult – and tell them they will have a good life	Try to change your child’s LGBTQ identity or expression
Welcome your child’s LGBTQ friends to your home	Exclude your LGBTQ child from family events & activities

Note how our Certification Standards echo this information about helpful and harmful behaviors:

- Applicants and certified families must ‘...respect, accept and support the ... sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression ... of a child or young adult in the care or custody of the Department, and provide opportunities to enhance the positive self-concept and understanding of the child or young adult’s heritage.’
- Certified families must not ‘Use derogatory remarks about the child or young adult, or the ... sexual orientation, gender identity and expression ...of the child or young adult.’

As dedicated caregivers, we are in a constant process of learning about ourselves and about how we can best support the young people in our care. For more information about how to support LGBTQ youth, see the Foster Parent Resource section, ‘Supporting LGBTQ youth’. For more information about Dr. Ryan’s helpful and harmful behaviors, please visit the Family Acceptance Project Website at <https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>

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## Caregiver Spotlight

### Connection in Your Local Fostering Community

Meet Foster Parents Rachel and Daniel – they have been on the fostering journey for over 4 years when they stepped forward to care for a child known to them. “Fostering was something that we had been interested in and had thought about doing for a while, but we hadn’t planned on jumping in quite yet. At the time, I was working as a caseworker doing CPS and I constantly saw the need for loving homes and dedicated foster parents, especially when children were removed and the shortage of foster homes made it difficult to find a placement for them. For us, when we found out that kids we already had a relationship with were coming into care, we knew it was time for us to move forward with fostering.” said Rachel.

Becoming a foster parent, despite its challenges at times, has helped Rachel and Daniel feel like they have made a positive and tangible difference in their community and family. This family has really enjoyed the ability to build supportive relationships with birth families and seeing the progress that children in their care make.

When initially certified, things felt challenging, confusing and isolating at times. Rachel and Daniel committed that they would reach out and become more involved in the fostering community – by attending support groups and getting to know others. Now Rachel and Daniel have several other foster families they can reach out to with questions and receiving support.



When asked what advice they would give others, Rachel and Daniel responded with the following: “I would really encourage anyone who is interested in learning more about foster care to take the first step and reach out to their local DHS office. Even if your family is not ready to commit to fostering full time, there are so many opportunities to get involved and

make a difference for kids in foster care, both through DHS and non-profits around the state that help support kids in care. Everything from putting together bags of clothes and toiletries for kids just coming into care to providing babysitting for a foster family can make a huge difference for children who are in foster care.”

If you are a foster parent and would like to connect further with your local area, reach out to your certifier – they can make connections with other foster parents.

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## Training

### Helping Youth put their Futures First

[We Think Twice](#) is a youth-driven social media campaign that empowers youth to build knowledge and skills to form healthy relationships, set goals for the future, and feel confident in their decision not to have sex, use drugs, drink, smoke, or engage in other risky behaviors. As a caregiver, you are an essential role in modeling, sharing information, and supporting youth in your homes to feel empowered about their next steps.



*We Think Twice* is full of resources to help youth make healthy decisions about their lives. As adults, sometimes we feel stuck about having those conversations. This website can provide resources to help with those conversations! Check out the website today for quizzes, articles, and a sample goal setting planner:

<https://www.wethinktwice.acf.hhs.gov/>

### Online Foundations Training

During COVID-19, we launched delivering our Foundations Training online via live video conferencing with local Child Welfare trainers. If you are in need of completing this 8 part training series, please create an [iLearn](#) account and search “live video conferencing” to register for a Foundations session that works in your schedule. Each session will appear as “CW - Foundations Training - Session 1 (live video conferencing)”. If you are having challenges accessing registration, please reach out to [FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us)

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## Community

### OFPA Corner: Braiding Strong Ties, Strengthening Families

As foster parents, you face many challenges as you advocate for and support the children in your care. Recent events have multiplied those challenges. Still, I see most of you handling whatever comes with patience and grace. Foster parents are already some of the most valuable, effective, and hardest working people in the state’s volunteer pool.

I want to offer some ideas that may increase your effectiveness even more. These three approaches are listed in order of deepening impact. If you can master all three, like strands in a braid, the whole will be stronger than each individual action. Best of all, each of these techniques are within your power to initiate.

The first is COMMUNICATION. Foster parents know that it is easier to cope when things go sideways (and they will) if you know and understand what is happening. By taking the first step and making it clear to other members of the team that you believe communication is critical to the success of the case, you are laying the foundation. Follow through by keeping every member of the team in the loop about what is happening for the child or youth in your care.

The second strand is RELATIONSHIPS. A relationship is ‘the way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave with each other.’. This is more than knowing the names of the team members. It is more than having good communication. Relationships begin with respect for the other person and take some nurturing. Be conscious that you are building a relationship, not simply a work connection.

The last strand that ties our braid together is PARTNERSHIPS. Ideally, everyone on the team is working in partnership with each other. Realistically, this probably will not happen. If you need to prioritize someone to build a partnership with, you cannot go wrong with putting the birth parent at the top of the list.

Even if you don’t (or can’t) have a meet-up in the park or ‘come to dinner for the holidays’ kind of relationship, there are ways to build a partnership. Remember, despite everything that may have happened, most parents love their children and want the best for them. When the child goes to visitation include a note letting the parent know how the child is doing. Write about the good grade on the test, the book they read all by themselves, the Lego castle they built. Send a picture of that ‘A’ paper, the book, or the Lego project. Let them know that you are keeping their child safe while they do what they need to do to be reunified with the child. A partnership with the birth parent eases stress on both families.

Communication, Relationships, and Partnerships woven together into a braid will not only strengthen your efforts to love and support the children that come into your care. You will strengthen both your foster family and the birth family. And, finally, you will gain added support for your efforts in this very necessary, difficult, and rewarding job that you have taken on.

As president of the Oregon Foster Parent Association, I want to thank you for all that you do. I applaud you for stepping up to meet the additional challenges of late. I’m in awe of your strength, your courage, and most of all for the love you give to all the children and families who need it as they move toward reunification and healing.



If you have any comments, questions, or issues, please feel free to email me directly at [jessica.lloyd.rogers@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.lloyd.rogers@gmail.com).

Jessica L. Lloyd-Rogers  
President, OFPA

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## Tips

### Strengthening Families During a Pandemic and Beyond

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has released a new resource for caregivers about building resilience during this time. The article can be found at [here](#). CSSP also offers other articles, blogs, and [recorded webinars](#) that may be of interest to you as a caregiver.

## News Clips from Oregon

[Beaverton Foster Dads Make Their House a Home](#)

[Foster Youth Encouraged to Tap Their Creativity](#)

[“We have a family” Adoptions go virtual during pandemic](#)

[Parent Advisory Council Provides Mentorship, Support and Insight](#)

[Four Facts About Child Welfare During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

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## Contact us

Have suggestions, ideas, tips?

Email: [FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us)

Website: [Foster Care Newsletter](#)

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Foster Care Program by email [FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:FosterFamily.Supports@dhsosha.state.or.us).

