

CHAT QUARTERLY

Caregiver Happenings, Awareness and Triumphs
an Oregon Department of Human Services -Child Welfare Division Newsletter



Child Welfare Director's Message

Greetings Caregivers and Resource Families,

For the past year and a half, we have been waiting in anticipation for when our children will return to school in person. While we are so encouraged to see schools open back up and children back in classrooms, we know all of you are navigating what it means in this new normal. However, your resilience, compassion, and innovativeness this past year and a half gives me confidence that our children in your care will not only adapt but thrive as they return to school.

We know that all families, especially during the pandemic, can face times of stress. During this time, we focused on providing preventive and support services for families. This includes partnering with Every Child for the My NeighbOR initiative, providing funding and assistance to teenagers in foster care and foster care alumni, increased benefits and access to food, and more.

After a Week in Foster Care

Author

Amy Ludwig VanDewater

My class is nice and helpful.
The dinners here are good.
I have a hat and coat and boots
like Teacher says I should.
There isn't any hitting.
The cat likes me a lot.
They ask me if I'm happy.
It's hard because I'm not.
This will not last forever but still I feel so sad.
I know I'm safer here for now
but I miss my Mom and Dad.

*perspective of a youth in care

Director's Message cont.

With back-to-school, we also anticipate increased calls to our Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH). As we prepare for this, we continue to put equity as our north star. For example, we know that family poverty usually does not equate to child neglect, and 40% of the calls to ORCAH do not result in an assigned report. Therefore, we are stepping up our communications around ways families like yours can promote prevention and share information before a call comes into ORCAH.

Now is the time for us to increase supports to families as they navigate back to school. We hope the resources in this newsletter equip you with the information you need to help our children and families through this new transition. We ask for your support in the upcoming transitions for our children and encourage you to reach out if there are any other supports you need.

Thank you for your dedication to caring for children and families. Your work and care are an integral part of our state's child well-being system. Please take care of yourselves and your families,

Kind regards,

Rebecca Jones Gaston (she/her), MSW
Child Welfare Director

Whispers of Wellness

COVID-19 IN-PERSON PARENT/CHILD VISIT PROTOCOL FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

updated 8/2/21

[Full visitation guide English](#)

[Full visitation guide Spanish](#)

[Additional Covid-19 Resources](#)

HYGIENE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A FAMILY VISIT BEFORE A VISIT

- *Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.*
- *Avoid touching your face.*
- *Only bring items necessary for the visit to the visit. Leave any bags in your car or with staff.*

DURING A VISIT

- *When possible, maintain the recommended 6 ft. social distance between people.*
- *Face coverings must be worn during child transport, and indoor visits.*

AFTER A VISIT

- *Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.*
- *Avoid touching your face.*
- *Clean the following items regularly: phone, pen, keys, any additional supplies.*

ALL ABOUT ME Books

Trauma informed tool for supporting youth and young adults in foster care.

Allie Fahsholz, allie.e.fahsholz@dhsosha.state.or.us

“I am so excited that ODHS is introducing All About Me books for all children and young people in the care of the State of Oregon so we can honor and safeguard their stories for their future.”

~Richard Rose, founder of Therapeutic Life Story Work International (TLSWi)

“This approach is a perfect way to assist all those involved in the care of children and young people to support them in capturing, recording and safeguarding their worlds every 6 months. In doing so, we enable young people to exit Care with a clarity of their lives collected in sets of 20ish page booklets that - when all put together - tell their story.”

~Richard Rose, founder of Therapeutic Life Story Work International (TLSWi)

ALL ABOUT ME BOOKS

WHAT: All About Me Books are a trauma-informed tool that anyone can use and are a sure-fire way to engage children and youth. It is a book documenting a child’s interests, feelings, and ultimately captures who they are and their journey. These books are simple and priceless. Most importantly they are created by our children. Children use these years from now to refresh their memories and build meaningful connections.

WHO: For all children and youth in ODHS care. This engagement tool will benefit children, youth, and families as they work towards reunification or other permanency goals. This tool can also bring joy to caregivers and workers as they have more meaningful and fulfilling engagement with children and youth.

WHY: We know that children who understand their story are better prepared for the next steps in their life. Children deserve to not only understand their history but share their voice of who they are and heal in the process. Youth in our care have expressed that a lack of information regarding prior placements, friends, memories in care, etc. has led to an overall disconnect from their community and ultimately created a barrier for their future. This tool has been evidenced to support nurturing and attachment, community connection, transitions, and permanency work for children across the globe.

HOW: We engage children at their developmental level and utilize templates to customize books that they help create. Through playful and fun interactions these books capture a child’s history, culture, and current interests and are a gift they will be able to cherish. Through a team approach a new chapter is created every 6 months throughout a child’s time in care, and will enhance the team’s knowledge and understanding of the child/youth.

WHEN: Fall 2021: In line with our Vision for Transformation and continuing with our agency focus on engagement this tool will enhance our interactions with children, youth, and families.

ALL ABOUT ME Books cont.

Templates will be available in electronic and paper form through ORPARC or the child/youth's caseworker. These templates are available in a wide range of themes that children can choose from with an additional template available for infants.

For more information please check out these upcoming trainings;

Date: 11/9/21
Time: 2-4pm
[Registration](#)

Date: 11/10/21
Time: 9-11am
[Registration](#)

Date: 11/18/21
Time: 9-11am
[Registration](#)

Course Description: Marvel at the potential of the All About Me Books! These are engaging tools that help children make sense of their lives, create a snapshot of their lives at a moment in time, enhance their self-worth, and express their thoughts and feelings productively.

Please watch for additional information coming soon!

SAMPLE PAGE



Our three programs, the Project Lemonade Store, Foster the Future Summer Internship and WISH (What Inspires Student's Hearts), provide foster youth a chance to Shop. Learn. Dream.

With the odds against our foster children, let's do what we can to turn lemons into lemonade.

Project Lemonade is a resource that is available to resource parents who serve within Oregon. Please visit their website www.projectlemonadepdx.org for more information about this amazing resource.

NATIONAL KINSHIP AWARENESS MONTH

September 2021

National Kinship Care Month in September recognizes the importance of grandparents and relatives caring for children when their parents are unable. Across the nation, approximately 2.7 million grandparents and 1.4 million other relatives are providing kinship care for children.

Oregon Kinship Navigator is a great resource for kinship providers.

About Oregon Kinship Navigator

In the state of Oregon, approximately 35,000 kids are being raised in relative care. Oregon Kinship Navigator (OKN) aims to provide support, guidance, and resources to those families throughout their parenting journey.

OKN is housed within the Children's Team at Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI). Our staff members are located throughout the state of Oregon and bring unique knowledge of both the urban and rural communities of Oregon.

What We Do

Let us help you navigate raising kids as a non-parent relative caretaker. Oregon Kinship Navigator is here to answer your emails. We offer opportunities to connect with other relative caregivers and parenting support, resource referral, and a legal resource guide.

OKN specializes in working with families both in and outside of the child welfare system.

For more information please visit [Oregon Kinship Navigator](#).



Currently recruiting kin caregivers (Grandparents! Aunts! Uncles! Siblings!) caring for children 4 years old and above. KEEP is partnering with the Oregon Kinship Navigator program to deliver KEEP for Kin. KEEP for Kin provides peer support groups for grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, and others who are caring for related youth and children and is for families may or may not be involved with DHS.

These 16-week groups are a fun, practical combination of peer support and parenting strategies. Daytime, evening, and weekend groups available; we will find a group time that works best for you.

What is KEEP for Kin?

- A peer support group of 7-12 relative caregivers and a trained group leader
- A trauma-informed framework of curriculum - Evidence-based parenting strategies you can use today!
- Groups take place via videoconference with easy-to-use technology
- 16 weekly, 90-minute sessions - Receive \$25/session per household for each session attended (earn up to \$400)

For more information, and to get signed up, contact:

Julie Chapman: juliec@oslc.org 541-780 3803

IN THE NEWS:

[Foster care visitation center more family-friendly](#)

by Lydia Valenti, *The Spokesman*

[Local Athletes Take Part in All State Games](#)

by Burns Times - Herald

[Foster care official partners with Hillsboro Home Depot](#)

by Max Egener, *Hillsboro News Times*

[Every Child Central Oregon receives Brooks Resources grant for foster care services](#)

by KTVZ news sources

TRAINING TIDBITS

New Registration Process for Statewide Foundations and Ongoing Trainings

Do you need to sign up for training hours but are unsure of where to go? We have recently changed our registration processes and no longer use iLearn Oregon to register for our statewide training opportunities using Smartsheet Forms.

Foundations Training: Foundations Training is a 24 hour curriculum for all prospective or newly certified resource parents and pre-adoptive parents. Have you checked with your local ODHS Child Welfare office? Some offices are hosting local facilitated trainings or you may choose to register for one of our statewide Foundations cohorts.

To register for a statewide Foundations cohort and for more details about Foundations training, please go to our [Foundations Training page](#) and follow the steps to complete the Smartsheet registration form. All Foundations trainings, statewide or locally offered, are being provided in a virtual/live format through Zoom or Microsoft TEAMS.

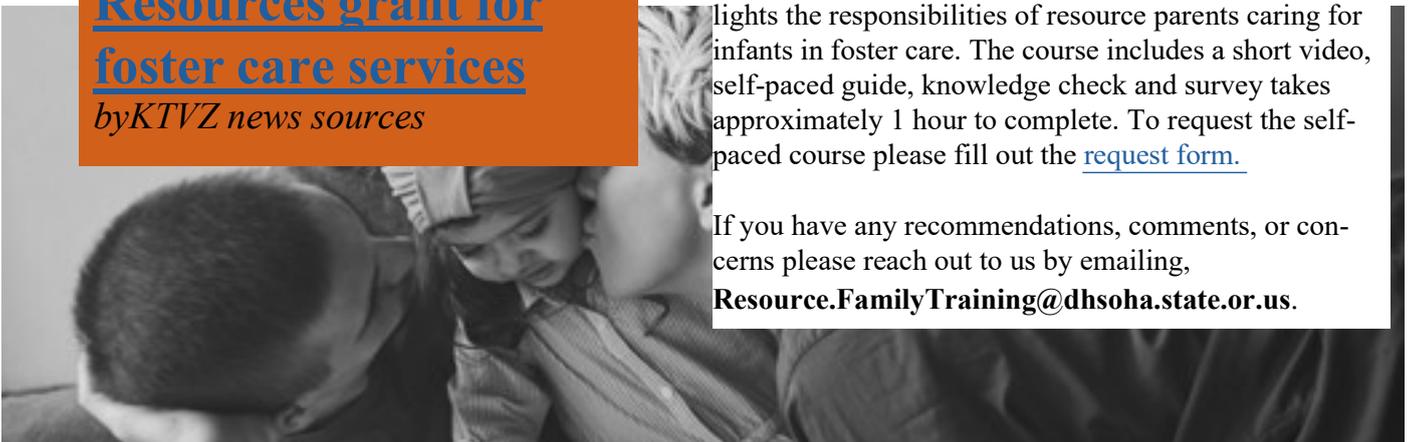
Ongoing Training: Are you currently certified through ODHS Child Welfare but need ongoing training hours? Look no further! We have a wide variety of virtual/live opportunities held monthly. Our Ongoing Resource Parent Live Online Training Opportunities page is consistently up to date. Review the title and course description and click on the "Registration" hyperlink, you will be connected to a Smartsheets Form to complete the registration request process. Review our [How To Register Guide](#) for step by step assistance. For any questions or assistance, please reach out to [Resource Family Training](#).

Safe Sleep for Oregon's Infants Self-Paced Training

ODHS Child Welfare has developed a self-paced course for up resource parents caring for infants in foster care (Spanish course is coming soon!). This course provides up to date information on safe sleep practices and highlights the responsibilities of resource parents caring for infants in foster care. The course includes a short video, self-paced guide, knowledge check and survey takes approximately 1 hour to complete. To request the self-paced course please fill out the [request form](#).

If you have any recommendations, comments, or concerns please reach out to us by emailing,

Resource.FamilyTraining@dhsosha.state.or.us



Fostering School Success: How Caregivers and Social Workers Can Support the Educational Needs of Children

Introduction Webinar

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Eastern Time



Among child welfare service and program goals is the achievement of children and youth's educational progress to match their potential and needs. Educational success of children and youth in the child welfare system depends, in part, on the collective efforts and collaboration of caregivers (foster, adoptive, and kinship), social workers, and agency management to address challenges and strategies for success. Join Dr. Gwen Bass for an introduction webinar based on the four-part, skill-building training detailed below. [Click here to register for this webinar.](#)

Virtual Training

September 21 & 28 and October 5 & 12, 2021

12:00 pm – 2:00 pm Eastern Time

CWLA is pleased to invite you to join us for Fostering School Success: How Caregivers and Social Workers Can Support the Education Needs of Children virtual training. This engaging skill-building opportunity that will share how to improve school experiences and long-term outcomes for children who have experienced trauma. Participants in this training will:

- Develop an understanding of common barriers to educational access and engagement for youth who have experienced trauma.
- Learn practical strategies for cultivating resilience at home that will lead to improved school performance.
- Advance their knowledge of the education system and supports available to children with special needs and circumstances.
- Expand their collaboration and advocacy toolkits to ensure children and youth have access to high quality schooling.

This four-part training is appropriate for foster, adoptive, and kinship caregivers, and social workers and staff who have an interest and responsibility to better support children and youth in school as well as their educational achievement. Using case examples, discussion, skill-building exercises, and opportunities for Q&A, this training draws on the latest research in trauma and learning.

Trainer: Gwen Bass, PhD, Director of the Teacher Leadership Division, Professional and Graduate Education, Mount Holyoke College

[Click this link for full details on the Fostering School Success virtual training, registration, and CEUs.](#)

2021 School Guidance Documents

provided by Catherine Stelzer CATHERINE.R.STELZER@dhsosha.state.or.us

[ODHS Child Welfare Education Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

<https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/CHILDREN/Documents/Education%20Guidance%202021-2022.pdf>

[Ready Schools, Safe Learners Resiliency Framework for the 2021-2022 school year](#)

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/healthsafety/Documents/Ready%20Schools%20Safe%20Learner%20Resiliency%20Framework%20for%20the%202021-22%20School%20Year.pdf>

[Individualized COVID-19 Recovery Services for students experiencing disabilities \(IEP's\)](#)

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-andfamily/healthsafety/Documents/Planning%20for%20Individualized%20COVID-19%20Recovery%20Services.pdf>

[FACT Oregon \(resource for parents/resource parents around special education/IEP's\)](#)

https://www.factoregon.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIldu37OyL8gIVNQtBh2zxwzTEAAYASAAEgI7-PD_BwE

A Word from Oregon Foster Parent Association

Compassion, Self-Care and Self-Regulation: Part 3

Jessica L. Lloyd-Rogers, President, OFPA

This is the third in a series where I have talked about the importance of resource parents giving themselves the lasting gifts of compassion, self-care, and self-regulation. We talk about the importance of self-regulation for our children, but often neglect to understand how critical it is for us.

When a child melts down or we become dysregulated, we have literally ‘flipped our lid.’ Our pre-frontal cortex -the advanced thinking part of our brain becomes temporarily incapable, and we are reacting out of our lower, instinctive brain. Just like young children, we are out of control i.e., have become dysregulated.

Much of the following information below comes from Anna Runkle. How do you know when you are dysregulated? Here are some signs: You find yourself suddenly in a rage or you urgently need to say something to someone. You may feel spaced out. You feel scattered, trying to do a lot of things at one time and finishing nothing. You lose some of your sensory ability, not feeling parts of your body. You are disconnecting from the situation. You start tripping over things, dropping things, losing things.

When you experience any of these signs, here are some emergency steps to take to re-regulate. First, NOTICE when you are dysregulated. Flooding with emotion? Adrenaline? Panic? Tell yourself, “I’m having an emotional reaction.” Simply naming it helps interrupt the pattern.

Make sure you are safe. If you are driving, pull off the road. If you are in a bad situation, remove yourself. Its okay to say, even to young people, “I want to continue this conversation, but I need to take a little time to calm down.” Separate from the other person/people if possible. I’ve found a trip to the bathroom to washmy hands and a drink of water may be enough. The sensory act of washing hands is often enough to help ground us and bring us back to the present.

Taking sensory actions, such as washing your hands or taking a slow drink of water, bring you back into your body. Try pressing your tongue to the back of your teeth. This has the advantage of being invisible to others. If you can, sit down, and consciously feel your butt on the seat. Feel your feet on the floor. First the left then the right. Say it silently to yourself, “Left, right. Left, right.” This helps regulate your brain. If you are in an appropriate, safe place, put your back to the wall or the chair and wrap your arms around you intoa big squeezing hug.



Another important technique is to eat some protein to get grounded. A spoonful of cottage cheese or peanut butter will help.

This last technique is my personal favorite. Breathe. Take 3-10 strong slow deep breaths in and slowly exhale. Think of letting go with each exhale. It works.

Becoming dysregulated can happen to all of us. The tips above will help ensure that your recovery and re-regulation happens quickly and safely. Here’s to a well-regulated self.