

TEAM WORK IN FOSTER CARE

Written By: Dr. Lark Eshleman, Expert in Trauma and Attachment

Dr. Eshleman will be Presenting as a Keynote & Workshop Trainer at IFAPA's [Fall Conference](#)



Several years ago I presented a workshop called "Incorporating Family into Therapeutic Healing." It was so enthusiastically received that I have offered the presentation over and over again, to much the same response.

The secret of its success, I believe, is two-fold: (1) here are practical ways in which you, as parents (foster, adoptive, grand, etc) can and hopefully WILL engage in the therapeutic and educational process with your child. (2) In this workshop parents are encouraged to "use your gut. Believe in what you feel and think. YOU are your child's expert, so use your strength and knowledge on your child's behalf." This assertion is usually met with stunned silence and then enthusiastic support. But as a professional in the field of attachment, trauma, foster care and adoption, I have known all along that I am definitely a team MEMBER, not the team leader.

Remember, though, that you need and deserve – and should demand – constant support for parenting a child who has come to you through foster care. When I developed and ran a mental health clinic for children and families, specializing in early attachment trauma, I emphasized that each child needed to be the center of a team, and that team should be captained by the parent, if he or she was willing, and that if there were two parents, that both parents had to be moving in the same direction.

As mental health professionals, we became part of each child's team; the more of the child's "world" joined the team, the better! Depending on the child, that included parent(s) and often other children in the family, case workers, therapists and medical professionals, teachers, school counselors, members of the child's extended family and of their faith community, and "cheerleaders" – sometimes from the child's birth family and always people who were wholeheartedly rooting for the child and willing to give time and energy to help support this child in a collaborative way.

So, how to lead this team? Here are some suggestions.

#1 - Chose your favorite books and articles, maybe one that you read in a foster parent class, and ask each member of the team to read. This raises everyone's level of common understanding. It is critically important for you to understand that perhaps most of your "team" does not

understand all that you do, your child's situation and experiences, and how best to support your child.

#2 - Give your team members a few simple practices that will help your child. For example, if you know that it is helpful to your child to give a "5 minute notice" before changing activities, offer that suggestion to team members. If your child is able to participate in activities best by first taking several deep breaths, make sure that all teachers, therapists, and other members of the team know that they should take time to encourage the child to do that. Keep introducing new information about the ways your child functions best.

#3 - Be a positive role model, and ask team members to do the same. If you know that your child needs to "count to 10" in order to calm down, then you do the same and ask team members to follow suit! This involves you being involved in your child's therapy, also. When things are going right, parents are one of the absolute best resources a therapist can have. If you are not included in at least some aspect of therapy on a regular basis, ask why not....and talk with your case worker about the possibility that a different therapist might help you to become more involved in your foster child's healing process.

#4 - Being a team leader does NOT mean that you do all the work, or that you have all the answers. Being a team leader means that you ask for help, accept what seems the most helpful, share information with all team members (yes, it takes time; maybe there's a team member whose job is simply to help you organize and distribute/follow-up with communication), and support your team. It also means that you ask for help from the team, for yourself and your family. If your child is in need of a team, then YOU are in need of a supportive team, too. You can't do this alone.

There is good news about the long-term benefits of team-work foster care. One study shows that foster children who were supported by therapy during placement were significantly LESS likely to be in the judicial or mental health system as young adults, and were significantly MORE likely to have good jobs and be engaged in meaningful relationships. Good news for your child! Go TEAM!

INTRODUCING
— THE —
**2016 FALL
CONFERENCE**

FRIDAY & SATURDAY - OCTOBER 28 & 29, 2016
MARRIOTT HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
300 EAST 9TH STREET, CORALVILLE



Expanding Your Knowledge
on the Unique Needs of
Children in Foster and
Adoptive Homes



COST

PARENTS:
\$50 1 Day Conference
\$70 2 Day Conference

SOCIAL WORKERS:
\$80 1 Day Conference
\$100 2 Day Conference

QUESTIONS

CALL IFAPA AT 800.277.8145
OR VISIT IFAPA.ORG

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28

SESSION A WORKSHOPS

(8:30am - 11:45am)

- A1** - How Trauma Affects the Children That Come Into Foster Care **RESMIYE ORAL, MD**
- A2** - Delayed Launching to Launched: Adolescent Identity Formation Stage and Extra Challenges for the Adoptee **YVETTE SAEUGLING, LISW**
- A3** - Creating Supportive Environments for LGBTQ Youth **MOLLY HERRMANN**
- A4** - Why Don't Friends Come With Instruction Manuals **DR. SUMMER BRUNSCHEEN**

SESSION B WORKSHOPS

(1:20pm - 4:30pm)

- B1** - Supporting Healthy and Sustainable Transitions: From Your Hearts to Other Hands **LARK ESHLEMAN, PHD**
- B2** - Keeping Up with Drug Culture **NORA KURTOVIC**
- B3** - Psychotropic Medications and Children - A Hard Pill to Swallow **CHRIS MCCORMICK PRIES, ARNP**
- B4** - It's All Greek to Me! A Brief Overview of Learning Disorders **DR. SUMMER BRUNSCHEEN**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29

SESSION C WORKSHOPS

(9:00am - 12:15pm)

- C1** - The Effects of Disrupted Attachment on a Child's Brain, Heart and Future **KATE HABERMAN, LISW, MFT, RPT**
- C2** - Calming Care for Foster Youth: Providing Support to Those that Experienced Trauma **AMBER JEWELL, LMSW**
- C3** - Human Trafficking - An Overview **MIKE FERJAK**
- C4** - CPR & FIRST Aid (*CPR workshop is held from 8am to 12:15pm*) **KARLA THOMPSON**

SESSION D WORKSHOPS

(12:15pm - 1:15pm)

- D1** - The Benefit to "Being With" a Child **KATE HABERMAN, LISW, MFT, RPT**
- D2** - Growing Up Out of Foster Care **AMBER JEWELL, LMSW**
- D3** - Love Is All You Need? (Culturally Responsive Parenting) **TAMMERA BIBBINS, MSW**
- D4** - Partnering for Placement Stability (*must be a family residing in the Cedar Rapids Service Area to attend*) **KAREN ANDREW & ANN KOPF**

LEARN MORE AT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

[REGISTER VIA MAIL](#) [REGISTER ONLINE](#)

All registrations are due by Wed., October 19.

IFAPA'S PEER LIAISONS OFFER FOSTER PARENTS A UNIQUE KIND OF SUPPORT

Have you ever wondered what they do and why they are calling? IFAPA's Peer Liaisons are foster parents just like you! IFAPA's Peer Liaisons serve a unique purpose. As current foster parents with many years of experience, Peer Liaisons are able to provide Iowa's resource families with first-hand knowledge and support. They have experience dealing with many of the same issues facing other foster families. They are trained to help empower foster families to advocate for the best interests of the children in their care. Many of our liaisons have had a variety of ages and children in their care; they may have personally dealt with the same issue you are now experiencing and can provide a listening ear when the fostering experience becomes overwhelming to parents. Peer liaisons will make contact with you via phone, mail or e-mail at least once each fiscal quarter (Jan-Mar, April-June, July-Sept, Oct-Dec), they can help you navigate the world of confidentiality, provide information and resources on trainings, support groups, foster home licensing regulations, offer contacts for DHS chain of command and offer assistance with communication needs. If they do not know the answer to a question, they will help find the needed information. IFAPA Peer Liaisons will maintain confidentiality at all times.

[VIEW LIAISON CONTACT LIST \(INCLUDING PHOTOS\)](#)

FREE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

The IFAPA website is filled with an abundance of resources to utilize throughout your parenting journey. Some of the topics you can find on our website includes:

- Caring for Children with Attachment Issues
- Parenting Children with Challenging Behaviors
- Navigating Birth Family Relationships
- Discussing Adoption with Your Child
- Preparing for a New Foster or Adoptive Placement
- Parenting Transracially
- Maintaining Sibling Relationships
- Transitioning Teens to Adulthood
- Parenting Traumatized Children
- Resource List of Iowa Therapists with Foster & Adoption Experience

[VIEW ARTICLES](#)

HOW CAN IFAPA'S RESOURCE INFORMATION SPECIALIST HELP ME?

IFAPA's Resource Information Specialist (RIS), Stephanie Clark, oversees our Peer Liaison program which includes eleven staff members. Our RIS also provides foster/adoptive families with available resources through email and phone support.

Call Stephanie with your questions!

- General licensing requirements
- General placement procedures
- Parenting challenging behaviors
- Working with the schools
- Seeking out respite options
- Training/support group opportunities

Stephanie has her B.S. in Criminal Justice/ Criminology and Psychology. Stephanie has worked as an FSRP and BHIS provider and a foster care licensing worker and supervisor. She also has experience facilitating PS-MAPP classes, is an adoption investigator and brings 11 years of experience in the Iowa Child Welfare system.



Stephanie Clark
800-277-8145 Office
515-777-8564 Cell
sclark@ifapa.org

ATTN: FOSTER PARENTS

In 2014, Congress passed a new law establishing prudent parent standards throughout the U.S. As part of this federal law, foster parents are now required to complete the Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard Training by Sept. 30, 2016.

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard allows foster parents to give their foster children permission to do age-appropriate activities that promote cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioral growth. All states are now required to promote normalcy for children in foster care.

[VIEW THE RPPS VIDEO](#)

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES DON'T HAVE TO BE DOOM AND GLOOM

Written By: Kim Combes, M.Ed., , Veteran IFAPA Trainer and Human Services Expert

"Trauma changes the biology of the brain, but just ONE secure, loving and nurturing relationship also changes the biology of the brain." --- Dr. Bruce Perry

Dr. Perry is my "rock star" in the human service field. He and his researchers are on the cutting edge of investigating children with PTSD, and how it affects those who have come from very difficult and traumatic backgrounds. In fact, I utilize his materials as I do my own presentations which are geared towards foster/adoptive parents, social workers, teachers, day care providers and others – all of whom have children with difficult and challenging behaviors in their charge.

Having been in the counseling arena in some capacity or another for over three and a half decades, I can confirm the veracity of the above quote. Research has shown tangible evidence of the heinous results of trauma...relationships that have been marred by such things as neglect, physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence and substance abuse in children's lives.

MRI scans clearly show brain dysfunction in those with multiple ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), pictures that resemble the "dark side of the moon" with black crater-like imaging throughout. However, when the same child is placed in a thriving environment in as little time as 6 months to a year, with all needs being met, an MRI photo will start showing bright colors – reds, purples, etc., displaying areas where healing is taking place and synapses are connecting in healthy ways.

It was formerly thought that once a brain was damaged, repair was not an option. Studies have since conclusively shown that previous thinking was in error. For example, my wife and I took our adoptive toddler son (born to parents both having intellectual disabilities) to a geneticist 17 years ago. It was thought by the placing social workers that Logan had some "syndrome," the name of which I can no longer remember. Tests came back negative, thankfully, but I will always remember what the examining doctor told Diane and me. "You cannot change the hard drive a baby is born with, but you can enhance that hard drive by the software you put into it." Wow, the validity of Dr. Perry's research, reworded in computer terminology.

As our son grew we did our best to stimulate and challenge his brain while providing for him a safe and nurturing home environment. Now, at 17 1/2 years of age, he has already exceeded the prognosis we were given from professionals when we received him in our family at 10 1/2 months old. His brain, before he was removed from his bio-parents at 3 months, was in "failure to thrive" mode. Neglect of his basic needs so early on did indeed negatively affect him. Left for hours in a car seat by his caregivers, with very little or no stimulation, brought him close to death before DHS could place him in foster care. The software we installed upon his entrance into our family, did not completely reverse what genes and history did to his command center, but he is much further along than what genes and traumatic history would have initially dictated.

My son's story is just one of a myriad of stories I've heard from others or have experienced firsthand over the course of my career. While PTSD undeniably has severe consequences on children enduring tumultuous and chaotic situations, the outcomes do not have to be all gloom and doom. One does not have to be psychologically savvy to do profound work in helping overcome ACEs. Anyone can be audaciously present in a youngster's life, thus creating an environment of hope and a legacy of love for those who desperately need both.



Mr. Kim Combes, M.Ed., has been in the human service field since 1980. He has been a residential treatment counselor/therapist, an educational aide, a DHS social worker, an in-home worker and foster/adoptive parent. Kim has fostered over 35 teen boys since 1994. He is currently a national presenter from Colo, IA, having spoken at numerous conferences across the U.S. He and his wife have adopted five children with various special needs, with the youngest still at home. Kim is a published freelance writer and is currently working on his first book project hoping to be published within the next year.

Don't miss Kim's popular class:

[Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach in Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors](#)

Upcoming Dates:

CLINTON

Sat., Sept. 24
(9am-4:30pm)

ANKENY

Sat., Nov. 5
(9am-4:30pm)

SHELDON

Sat., Nov. 12
(9am-4:30pm)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

GREAT RESOURCE: [25 WAYS TO NURTURE HURT CHILDREN](#) (By Gregory Keck, Ph.D. & Regina Kupecky, LSW)

ATTENTION ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Adoption Subsidy Check Reminder From DHS

If you move it is important to notify your adoption subsidy worker of your new mailing address. If DHS is NOT notified of your new address, the check will be returned and won't be mailed until the new address has been provided. Even if your family completed a USPS change of address form, this is NOT sufficient and checks cannot be forwarded to your new address. Please call your county DHS office if you do not know who your adoption subsidy worker is.

[VIEW DHS PAYMENT SCHEDULE](#)

DO YOU NEED HELP FINDING A PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS OF A STATE EMPLOYEE? (i.e. DHS Staff or Judicial Employee)

Did you know you can utilize the state's Electronic Employee Directory to find contact information for DHS staff and Judicial staff? The directory search feature allows you to find an employee by searching their name (first or last), department, address, city or zip. This feature will allow you to locate their phone number, e-mail address, mailing address and job title.

[USE DIRECTORY](#)

INTEGRATIVE PARENTING: STRATEGIES FOR RAISING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ATTACHMENT TRAUMA

(6 hours credit) - Integrative Parenting is a class that will empower parents of children impacted by trauma, with effective techniques to improve relationships with their challenging children. Parents will learn how to identify the root of their children's misbehaviors, learn effective methods to calm reactive and misbehaving children and identify the impact of past trauma on your relationship with your child. You will also learn how to help your child heal through attunement, nurturing messages and comforting touch. **Trainer: Renae Jones, MS, LMHC**

ANKENY - Sat., Nov. 19, 2016 (9am-4:30pm)

TO REGISTER - CALL 800-277-8145 or [REGISTER HERE](#)



3,319 FOLLOWERS

Are you one of them? Follow IFAPA on Facebook for news, parenting resources and touching stories.

[VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

NEW!

SEARCH FOR TRAININGS BY TOPIC

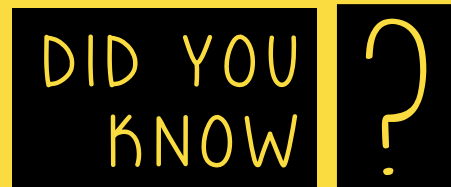
IFAPA offers an extensive amount of trainings to assist parents and professionals in continuing their education on the unique needs of children in foster and adoptive homes.

Our new TRAININGS BY TOPIC webpage gives foster, adoptive and kinship parents and professionals the opportunity to search for classes related to their current parenting situation.

IFAPA OFFERS CLASSES ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Attachment & Bonding
- Cultural Awareness
- Diagnosis & Disorders
- Education Resources
- Healthy Families
- Human Trafficking
- Managing Challenging Behaviors
- Understanding Mental Health
- Minimizing Your Risk
- Parenting Young Children
- Parenting School-Age Kids
- Parenting Teens
- Sexual Abuse and Behaviors
- Stress Management
- Substance Abuse & Its Effects
- Supporting LGBTQ Youth
- Understanding Trauma & Abuse
- Working with Birth Families

[SEARCH BY TRAINING TOPIC](#)



**IFAPA OFFERED 342
TRAININGS TO 4,410 PARENTS
AND PROFESSIONALS DURING
THE LAST FISCAL YEAR.**

AFTERCARE SERVES RECORD NUMBER OF FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

A record 836 young adults in 90 counties were served by the Iowa Aftercare Services Network (IASN) in State Fiscal Year 2016. This is a 10% increase from the previous year when 760 young people were served, and the first year since the program began in 2002 that more than 800 young people participated. Of young people served in SFY 2016, 318 accessed Aftercare services for the first time, also a record, according to data collected by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa – even as the number of youth aging out of foster care at age 18 has declined over the last several years.

“The fact that so many young people are taking advantage of the support offered by Aftercare is a testament to both the needs of this population and the quality of services provided by the Network,” stated Andrew Allen, CEO of YSS, the lead agency for the Iowa Aftercare Services Network. “I’m extremely proud of the services we provide, and even more proud of the progress and achievements of the young people we serve.”

Aftercare provides guidance, support and a financial cushion for young people who age-out of foster care or other court-ordered placements as they transition to adulthood. The program is voluntary and eligible young people between the ages of 18 and 21 may enter and exit services at their discretion. Aftercare services are funded and overseen by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT AFTERCARE](#)

.....\$500 GRANTS.....

Have you heard? Teens in foster care (age 14 & up) can now apply for a Friends grant up to \$500 per fiscal year.

Types of items that will be covered by the Friends of Children in Foster Care program include:

- Sports registrations
- Sporting equipment costs (helmets, gloves, cleats)
- Swimming lessons
- Summer camps
- Music instruments/lessons
- Tae Kwon Do
- Gymnastics/Dance
- Prom attire (dress, shoes and tux rental)
- Senior/class trips
- Class ring
- Senior pictures
- College application fees

For the application and to view the type of items covered by the Friends of Children in Foster Care program, [CLICK HERE](#).

.....FUTURE FEST.....

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2016 - WATERLOO

Mark your calendars to bring teens from your agency or foster home to Future Fest in Waterloo, on Tuesday, October 25th from 5pm to 8pm at Grace Lutheran Church (1024 W. 8th St). This event is FREE and designed for youth to get connections with resources in each of the five transition areas of housing, education, employment, health and supports! [VIEW FLYER](#)

.....AMP.....

There is always something new and exciting going on in AMP! This has been an amazing year as more youth are attending AMP and participating in local & statewide activities. Fall months are a great time to visit your local AMP Council meetings! Right now teens are generating ideas for the AMP 2017 Legislative Agenda! Youth who live within the child welfare system are the best at knowing what needs to be improved. AMP Councils are planning Halloween and Holiday parties plus youth are participating in Bully Walks, Hunger Fights, Reggie's Sleepout, Camp Reunion, DSM Art & Science Center classes and volunteering in community service projects! AMP Councils meet twice per month and this gives teens a chance to meet other youth ages 13-20 who share their same experiences in foster/shelter/treatment/group care/kinship care and adoption. Of course, there is always food and fun involved! Transportation is available by contacting the local facilitator.

[VISIT AMP WEBSITE](#) [CLICK HERE](#) for 16 AMP Council Locations