

# IOWA FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS ASSOCIATION



## 2016 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### SPECIAL NEEDS: CONTINUED SUPPORT OF FOSTER CARE, KINSHIP CARE & SUBSIDIZED ADOPTION PROGRAMS

IFAPA supports continued cost-of-living increases for the care of children in foster care and subsidized adoptive families. IFAPA also supports the expansion of the Iowa refundable tax credit for families who adopt children with special needs.

When a foster child is unable to safely return to his/her birth parent(s), adoption provides a stable, consistent, permanent, and loving family for the child. Adoption subsidy is available to children with special needs to help the family pay for vital services, treatments, and therapy. Adoption subsidies enable families to provide permanent homes for children who may not otherwise be adopted.

IFAPA recommends additional funding to provide both monetary and service supports to kinship families to help ensure placement stability.

### HEALTHY & HAPPY: IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR IOWA'S CHILDREN IN FOSTER, ADOPTIVE & KINSHIP FAMILIES

Children who are in foster, adoptive, and kinship families often enter the child welfare system with neglected medical, dental, and mental health needs – as well as a lack of understanding of proper nutrition. IFAPA supports adequate funding for health care programs and services for Iowa's most vulnerable children.

### BUILDING FAMILIES: CONTINUED FUNDING FOR TRAINING, SUPPORT, & RESPITE CARE FOR FOSTER, ADOPTIVE & KINSHIP FAMILIES

Children in foster care and kinship placements, as well as those adopted from foster care, present unique parenting challenges due to early traumatic experiences. IFAPA is the only statewide association that provides peer-to-peer support and training for foster, adoptive and kinship families. This support and training helps families develop the skills and expertise needed to parent the children placed in their homes.

### STABILITY OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS: CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE CERTIFIED RESPITE PROJECT

Access to quality respite care is crucial to maintain placement stability for children in foster care. IFAPA supports continued funding of the in-home respite program currently operating in 23 counties in Northeast Iowa and the exploration of expansion to additional areas in the state.



The Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association (IFAPA) members are 6,600 voices strong. Iowa's foster, adoptive and kinship families provide children with an opportunity to grow and thrive in safe and nurturing homes.

## THE FACTS - 2015

- Number of licensed foster parents across Iowa - 2,080
- Number of Iowa children in family foster care - 2,611
- 975 children were adopted from Iowa's foster care system
- IFAPA offered 345 trainings to 3,843 foster, adoptive and kinship parents
- IFAPA's staff provides support to an average of 2,200 foster, adoptive and kinship parents each month
- IFAPA processed 2,063 Adoption Respite requests
- IFAPA's Friends of Iowa Children in Foster Care Program was able to fulfill grant requests for almost 300 children in foster care

# HOW IFAPA SUPPORTS FAMILIES

The Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parents Association offers the following programs and resources to support foster, adoptive and kinship parents in Iowa.

## TRAININGS FOR FOSTER, ADOPTIVE & KINSHIP PARENTS

IFAPA offers a variety of continuing education courses to foster, adoptive and kinship parents throughout the year. IFAPA strives to provide effective trainings on parenting, working with the system and birth parents, and other relevant issues in foster care and adoption. IFAPA also hosts an annual spring and fall training conference for foster, adoptive and kinship parents and social workers.

## PEER LIAISONS

IFAPA has eleven foster and adoptive parent Peer Liaisons across the state. Peer Liaisons provide peer support to foster and adoptive parents in their assigned area of the state. They contact newly licensed foster homes, provide monthly updates to the families in their area and are available as an on-going source of information and support.

## RESOURCE INFORMATION SPECIALIST

Our Resource Information Specialists can help families successfully meet the challenges of parenting the children placed in their home through telephone support, educational materials, knowledge of services available, and connections to other families.

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups offer opportunities for parents to provide mutual support as well as obtain required training. IFAPA provides educational materials, training opportunities, and general support to over 50 support groups.

## SUBSIDIZED ADOPTION RESPITE PROGRAM

Families who receive adoption subsidy are eligible for five days of respite per year. IFAPA administers the Subsidized Adoption Respite Program for DHS by facilitating the respite payments.

## F.A.I.R. LINE

### (FOSTER ALLEGATION INFORMATION RESOURCE)

This program was developed to assist foster and adoptive parents across Iowa who face an allegation of abuse or neglect. The FAIR phone line is designed to provide support, information and resources to parents during a difficult time.

## IFAPA PUBLICATIONS

IFAPA publishes a variety of resource materials for foster, adoptive and kinship parents to assist them in understanding DHS procedures and to enhance their parenting skills. IFAPA also publishes a printed newsletter that is sent to all of our members on a quarterly basis. Our Association also keeps families informed with our weekly electronic newsletter that includes information on IFAPA programs, upcoming trainings, DHS updates, parenting children who have experienced trauma, handling difficult behaviors and working with birth parents.

## IFAPA WEBSITE

The IFAPA website serves as a resource for families and social workers in the field. Parents have access to a wealth of foster/adoptive information including foster/adoptive parent trainings scheduled across the state, issues of IFAPA's newsletters, and a wide variety of online resource articles and resources concerning parenting issues.

## FRIENDS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The Friends of Children in Foster Care program provides foster children with the funds they need for those special "extras" in life which they would otherwise not receive. Some items this program helps foster children obtain include, music instruments, summer camps, schools trip and senior pictures.

