

DECEMBER 13, 2016



Singing Makes People Happy

By Cassandra Sheppard

For a decade, science has been hard at work trying to explain why singing has such a calming yet energizing effect on people. Numerous studies demonstrate that singing releases endorphins and oxytocin – which in turn relieve anxiety and stress and which are linked to feelings of trust and bonding.

Singing helps people with depression and reduces feelings of loneliness, leaving people feeling relaxed, happy and connected. What's more, the benefits of singing regularly are cumulative. People who sing have reduced levels of cortisol, indicating lower stress.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON THE NEUROSCIENCE OF SINGING](#)

DHS NOTICE TO FOSTER FAMILIES WITH PLACEMENTS

Beginning December 12, 2016, some foster families with placements may receive letters regarding the MCO Annual Enrollment/Change Period and Privacy Rights for the foster children in their care. Foster families and those in the pre-adoption phase are not legally authorized to make the MCO enrollment decisions. If you receive any MCO letters for your foster children, please give the MCO letters to the foster child's assigned DHS caseworker.

IFAPA'S JANUARY TRAININGS

[REGISTER HERE](#)

DATE & TIME	LOCATION & NAME OF TRAINING
Sat., Jan. 7, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	ANKENY - The Grieving Process: How to Help You and Your Kids Heal
Sat., Jan. 7, 2017 (9am-12:15pm)	COUNCIL BLUFFS - Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training
Sat., Jan. 7, 2017 (1:15pm-5:30pm)	COUNCIL BLUFFS - CPR and First Aid <i>(To avoid late fees, register & pay by Sun., Jan. 1)</i>
Sat., Jan. 14, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	CEDAR FALLS - Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach in Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors
Sat., Jan. 14, 2017 (9am-12:15pm)	CEDAR RAPIDS - Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training
Sat., Jan. 14, 2017 (1:15pm-5:30pm)	CEDAR RAPIDS - CPR and First Aid <i>(To avoid late fees, register & pay by Sun., Jan. 1)</i>
Sat., Jan. 14, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	SIOUX CITY - ACT on Your Stress: Stress Management for Foster and Adoptive Parents Using Acceptance & Commitment Training
Sat., Jan. 21, 2017 (9am-12:15pm)	ANKENY - I Won't Do It & You Can't Make Me: ODD in Kids & Teens
Sat., Jan. 21, 2017 (1:15pm-4:30pm)	ANKENY - Arrggg...What Can I Do With My Kids? The Power of Receptive Parenting vs. Reactive Parenting
Sat., Jan. 21, 2017 (9am-12:15pm)	CEDAR FALLS - Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training
Sat., Jan. 21, 2017 (1:15pm-5:30pm)	CEDAR FALLS - CPR and First Aid <i>(To avoid late fees, register & pay by Sun., Jan. 8)</i>
Sat., Jan. 21, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	CEDAR RAPIDS - Foster Care Meets Mental Health: A Foster Parent Dilemma!
Sat., Jan. 28, 2017 (9am-12:15pm)	ANKENY - Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training
Sat., Jan. 28, 2017 (1:15pm-5:30pm)	ANKENY - CPR and First Aid <i>(To avoid late fees, register & pay by Sun., Jan. 15)</i>
Sat., Jan. 28, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	COUNCIL BLUFFS - Family Matters - Working with Birth Families in the 21st Century
Sat., Jan. 28, 2017 (9am-4:30pm)	DAVENPORT - Utilizing the Nurtured Heart Approach in Helping Children with Challenging Behaviors



Helping Children in Foster Care to Manage Holiday Stress and Emotions

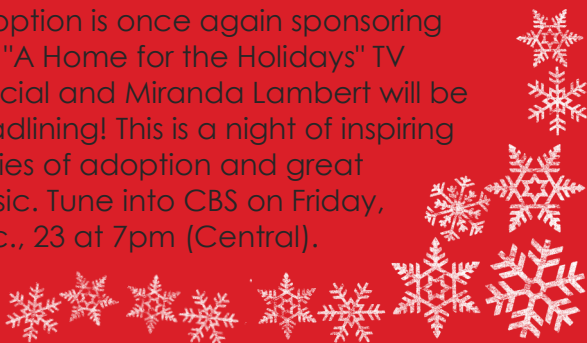
The holidays can be a stressful and busy time for everyone. For children in foster care, this time of the year can be especially difficult. Many children experience feelings of guilt, shame and sadness during the holidays. And their feelings might be really mixed. One young adult remembers how hard the holidays were for her and her conflicting feelings: she was sad because she was constantly reminded of how she was not with her family but she also felt guilty because she looked forward to presents and time with her foster family.

Understanding how difficult this time may be for foster children can help us support them and let them know we care. Here are some ways to help these children cope during the holiday season...

[CONTINUE READING](#)

A HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption is once again sponsoring the "A Home for the Holidays" TV special and Miranda Lambert will be headlining! This is a night of inspiring stories of adoption and great music. Tune into CBS on Friday, Dec., 23 at 7pm (Central).



BREAKING THE SANTA NEWS WITHOUT BREAKING YOUR KID'S HEART

Source: ScaryMommy.com

It's that time of year where some parents find themselves in the heartbreaking position of telling their kids there's no such thing as Santa. Whether it's a jerky fifth grader on the bus ruining the fun or a child old enough to put it all together on their own, it's sad and the end of an era. There's also the worry that you'll do it "wrong" and traumatize your child by telling them the truth.



Christy Hutchison posted on Facebook about the method she came across online to tell kids there's no Santa (gulp.) And it's pretty much perfect.

"In our family, we have a special way of transitioning the kids from receiving from Santa, to becoming a Santa. This way, the Santa construct is not a lie that gets discovered, but an unfolding series of good deeds and Christmas spirit," opens the most genius idea ever for breaking the Santa news.

The writer suggests taking the child out for "coffee" to share the secret. Tell them something like, "You sure have grown an awful lot this year. Not only are you taller, but I can see that your heart has grown, too. [Point out 2-3 examples of empathetic behavior, consideration of people's feelings, good deeds etc, the kid has done in the past year]. In fact, your heart has grown so much that I think you are ready to become a Santa Claus."

The idea is to let the child in on the secret of "being" Santa. You lead them to discuss the best parts of being Santa and then, help them become one themselves.

"We then have the child choose someone they know—a neighbor, usually. The child's mission is to secretly, deviously, find out something that the person needs, and then provide it, wrap it, deliver it—and never reveal to the target where it came from. Being a Santa isn't about getting credit, you see. It's unselfish giving."

It's easy to see why a kid would go crazy for this idea; I know mine would absolutely love not only being treated like a "big" kid, but getting to surprise someone with a special gift would thrill them. I'm slowly drying my tears and warming up to this whole situation. [VIEW ARTICLE](#)