

NEWS MAY 2017

FROM YOUR PEER LIAISON



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IFAPA Peer Liaison

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**I UNDERSTAND...
I AM A FOSTER PARENT TOO**

IFAPA recognizes that foster parents often need the perspective of peers during the foster parenting and adoption experience.

I can provide support and assist you with questions regarding:

- Licensing requirements
- Training needs
- Respite care
- Behavior challenges
- Working with birth families
- Confidentiality issues
- And much more!



www.ifapa.org

SAYING GOODBYE

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of being a foster parent is the moment when your foster child leaves your home. As a foster parent, your home becomes a place where foster children come for a period of time, with the goal of being reunited with their family in the near future. If reunification is not possible with the birth parents, many foster children instead are placed into another birth family member's home or adoptive. Whatever the reason might be, reunification can be a difficult time for foster parents, as the child they have come to love leaves their home. This may be a joyous event or one that is filled with grief. Whoever tells your foster child needs to do so in a way that is marked with care, sincerity, kindness and truthfulness. As there are a number of reasons why your foster child might leave your home, it is important that you be honest with him or her about leaving in terms and words that can easily be understood, and at the child's level. If the child is excited about returning home, celebrate this. Perhaps have a going away party, and celebrate the child's time with you. If the child is concerned and full of anxiety about moving to another foster home, an adoptive home or even about moving back to his or her own home, speak to the child in positive terms, keeping a positive attitude. Remind the child that he or she is an important person and that you care and want the best for him or her.

Grief can be expressed a variety of ways, depending upon the individual, as it is personal. Some will shed tears and cry while others will hold it inside. Some will busy themselves in a task, while others will seem detached and far away. The departure of your foster child from your home can be one that is devastating to you and your family. It is quite normal to experience the stages of grief, as outlined by Kubler-Ross. These include shock, denial, anger, guilt, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Both foster parents and foster children can experience these emotions. Make sure that you pack everything the child owns, including everything the child came with to your home. Include as many group photographs of the child with your family as possible. Pictures of you and your family may help him or her in the grieving process of leaving your home, and can serve as a valuable reminder that he or she is loved and cared for. Include your contact information, such as your address, phone number, email address, Facebook information, and letters from you and other family members that the child can read later. If at all possible, stay in contact with your former foster child as long as the rest of the family members are in agreement. This will assist the child in his or her transition and remind him or her of their value and importance. Saying goodbye is never easy for anyone, and may be especially difficult for you and your foster child. After your foster child leaves your home, you may feel like you never wish to foster again, as the pain is too great. The grief you feel may be overwhelming. You are not alone. With the right preparation, this time of transition can be a little bit easier for all involved.

(Taken from Dr. John DeGarmo, <https://www.scribd.com/document/154132252/Saying-Goodbye>)

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." ~ Winne the Pooh

NEWS FROM YOUR IFAPA PEER LIAISON

As we think about saying goodbye, I find myself having to say goodbye you as your IFAPA peer liaison. It has been IFAPA's privilege the last 40 plus years to serve you and your family with training, support and advocacy. The Department of Human Services has combined the Recruitment and Retention Contract and the Training and Support Contract held by IFAPA. Due to these changes, IFAPA's Peer Liaison Program will be ending June 30th, 2017. Families will continue to receive support services through the new Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support Contractors. IFAPA appreciates the time and dedication you have provided to so many children through the years.

Flower Painting



Variety of fake flowers, paint, paper. Dip flower tips in paint and lightly press on paper.

Rain Painting



Drop a variety of paints on a large piece of paper and then set out in the rain (a light rain or sprinkle works best).

