



JANET RORHOLM

IFAPA Peer Liaison

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"Corridor IFAPA Families"

**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

When it is time to say 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 adopted.

Whatever the reason, 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 he or she is leaving needs to do so in a way that is marked with care, sincerity, kindness and truthfulness. Since there can be 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 you can hold 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 normal to experience the stages of grief, as outlined by Kubler-Ross. These are: shock, denial, anger, guilt, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Both foster parents and foster children can experience these emotions.

It is important to 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 is 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. Remember, you are not alone. With the right preparation, this time of transition can be a little bit easier for all involved.

Source: 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." ~ Winnie the Pooh

IFAPA Says Goodbye

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.

I feel privileged to have worked with so many wonderful, caring people at IFAPA for the last four years. And it has been a pleasure to get to know so many foster and adoptive families in Eastern Iowa and across the state in this position!

Online Trainings

Did you know that you can take half of your 6 required yearly credit hours online? The other half must be taken in a group (face-to-face) setting. The following online organizations have been approved for online credit in Iowa. Note: There is a cost associated with these classes. For more information visit IFAPA's website at <http://www.ifapa.org/training/online-trainings.asp>.

FosterParents.com, (818) 998-4462:

Foster parents completing an online course(s) through FosterParents.com will receive the same amount of training credit as what the course is worth (i.e. Positive Discipline is worth 3 training credits, Iowa foster parents will receive 3 hours of credit). (The following courses on FosterParents.com are NOT approved for foster parent credit: Reactive Attachment Disorder - Bonding and Attachment Workshop I & Bonding and Attachment Workshop II, First Aid & CPR Renewal/Refresher – Universal Precautions).

FosterParentCollege.com, (800) 777-6636:

Foster parents completing an online course(s) through FosterParentCollege.com will only receive one hour of training credit per course regardless of how many credits their website says it's worth. The only course that is worth more credit is Substance-Exposed Infants, which is worth 2 credit hours.

Training Corner

IFAPA Training: The ABC's of Early Childhood Connections: Nurturing Social and Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers, 9 to 12:15 p.m. May 6 at the Clarion Hotel, Cedar Rapids. Speaker: Gwen Babberi. Free. 3 credit hours. Register: at 1-(800) 277-8145 Ext. 1 or <http://www.ifapa.org>

IFAPA Training: Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training, 9 to 12:15 p.m. May 6 at the Clarion Highlander Hotel, Iowa City. Free. 3 credit hours. Register: 1-(800) 277-8145 Ext. 1 or <http://www.ifapa.org>

IFAPA Training: CPR & First Aid, 1:15 to 5:30 p.m. May 6 in Iowa City. Cost: \$40. 4 credit hours. Register: 1-(800) 277-8145 Ext. 1 or <http://www.ifapa.org>

IFAPA Training: Gender & Sexuality Sensitivity, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. May 10 at the Clarion Hotel, Cedar Rapids. Speaker: Katie Haberman. Free. 3 credit hours. Register: 1-(800) 277-8145 Ext. 1 or www.ifapa.org

NOTE: There will be no Cedar Rapids support group in May due to end of the school-year activities. The next support group will be June 15.