

"Alone we can do so little.
Together we can do so much."
— Helen Keller



Montgomery County Foster Parent Association

P.O. Box 10006 • Gaithersburg, MD 20898-0006 • www.mcfpa.com

Fostering Communications

March 2003

A newsletter for foster and adoptive parents in Montgomery County. Published by DHHS.

Please Join!

The Montgomery County Foster Parent Association (MCFPA) is a non-profit organization and is independent from DHHS. All foster and adoptive parents and other interested persons are welcome at our meetings which are held the second Thursday of every month except July, August, and December. Dues are \$10 per year and can be mailed in or paid at the meetings.

The purpose of our organization is to address the needs of the children in care. This purpose is met by supporting foster and adoptive parents, answering questions, finding solutions, presenting helpful speakers at the meetings, and providing camps, tutoring, reduced cost day care, and sports activities.

Another benefit to joining is that you receive 1.5 hours of continuing education credit for each meeting you attend. You are required to complete six (6) hours of credit each year to maintain your license.

MARCH MEETING...

Coping with **TANTRUMS**

When: MARCH 13, 2003

7:30 - 9:00 pm

Topic: "Coping with Tantrums"

Speaker: Pam Mintz

Where: Epworth United Methodist Church
9008 Rosemont Dr., Gaithersburg, MD

Directions: The church is across from Walnut Hill Shopping Center on Route 355, near Shady Grove Road. There are three churches in a row. *Epworth United Methodist Church is the middle church with the stained glass steeple.* Parking is in the rear lot. Enter through the back doors, turn left, and follow the hallway around to the right to the social hall.



24-HOUR HOT-LINE

1-240-777-4417

**Montgomery County Department of Social Services
CHILD WELFARE DIVISION**



Meeting Child Care

is available free of charge.



Many of our topics are unsuitable for young ears, so we ask that no children old enough to comprehend the content be brought in to the meetings.

IMPORTANT: We will be regularly checking in on the children to be sure everything is well and there are no behavior problems. Any child not following the rules or the direction of our provider will be removed from the child care room and returned to the responsible parent(s). Since some of the meeting topics are not appropriate for young ears this may require that you leave the meeting as well. If you are bringing older children to the child care room please have a discussion with them about proper behavior, respect for others and property, and following the rules.

If you need child care during our meetings, call Bobbie Augustine a week before any meeting at (301) 977-0792. Children will not be accepted without a reservation.

Montgomery County Foster Parent Association 301-916-6001

OFFICERS

President:
Carolyn Smith301-208-6582

Vice President:
Gerrie Wright301-916-6001

Secretary:
Dave Brown.....301-916-6001

Treasurer:
Beverly Wright301-948-1197

DHHS Liaison:
Linda Gore(240) 777-3943

Newsletter Editor
Michelle Haggart.....(301) 972-0984
e-mail: michelle.haggart@verizon.net

The MCFPA Executive Board meets the first Monday of each month. Please leave a message at (301) 916-6001 if you have an item that should be discussed.

MARY ALLMAN, with Montgomery County Public Schools Special Education division, will help with any concerns you may have with special education issues. (301) 279-4967.

CAROL FRANCONI, who is an advocate for children, wants feedback on any concerns with **medical assistance or hmos** you may have for your foster children. 410-547-9200 x3006.

Need help
with Medical Care?

BRENDA PETERSEN who is a nurse and social worker can help access medical, dental, and mental health services for any child in state-supervised care. Please call her at 240-777-4439 if you need any assistance in obtaining health care or resolving billing issues for the children in your care.

This is **YOUR** newsletter!

All foster and adoptive parents are encouraged to provide articles. These might include finalized adoptions, articles written by the foster child themselves, and scholastic or extra-curricular awards. *The deadline for all contributions to the newsletter is seven days after the monthly meeting.* Please submit your contribution using one of the following methods:

E-mail: michelle.haggart@verizon.net
Mail: Fostering Communications
P.O. Box 10006
Gaithersburg, MD 20898-006
Telephone: (301) 916-6001

CANCELLATION POLICY Meetings will be cancelled if the schools are closed or close early due to inclement weather. The meeting will also be cancelled if Montgomery County Schools cancel evening programs. If you are in doubt call (301) 916-6001 and the recording will tell you if the meeting is on or not. If you prefer to speak to a person, you may call one of the officers. Regardless, do not venture out if driving looks too dangerous.

February 13, 2003

Meeting Minutes

by Dave Brown, Secretary

Attendance: 34

Carolyn Smith, president, brought the meeting to order at about 7:40 PM. She began with short introductions of the officers and everyone in attendance. A discussion followed concerning the need for fund raising ideas. Several people offered suggestions and ideas. One person suggested a cooperative effort with Avon which she has been involved with and has worked for other organizations. Follow-up on this as a possibility may be productive. Marcia Tivoli, a foster parent member and Home Interiors Rep., set up a display of the Home Interiors items that are included in the ongoing cooperative fund raising effort with her. There were many very nice items on display. Hopefully this will produce a good revenue for the association. Marcia has been very generous in her commission offer, 30% of the gross sales. Anyone with ideas or an interest in helping with the association should contact one of the officers by phone, mail or email.

Linda Gore, the DHHS liaison, then introduced herself and made a few short announcements. She also mentioned that she again brought a supply of Wednesday's Child tee-shirts, copies of a guide on "Federal Tax Benefits for Foster and Adoptive Parents and Kinship Caregivers 2002 Tax Year", developed for the Casey family Programs, and the usual array of forms and handouts. We then had a short refreshments social break.

After the refreshments break Linda introduced the speaker for the evening, Ms. Karen Studley, RN., a school nurse with the MCPS. Ms. Studley is a specialist in ADHD and made a presentation addressing the current issues regarding this disorder/condition. Ms. Studley also made a very interesting clarification about who she works for. Something I was unaware of, the school nurses and health room technicians at our county schools in fact work for the DHHS, not the MCPS, an interesting little fact. Ms. Studley's presentation was excellent.... by far the most informative talk on ADHD that I have ever attended. Many thanks to her for taking the time to inform us on this very pertinent topic. Many useful handouts were distributed at the meeting as well.

The door prize was won by Ms. Mary Ward, an plant arrangement donated by Carolyn Smith. The meeting was adjourned by Carolyn at about 9:00. We hope to see everyone at the next meeting.

Check out our website
www.mcfpa.com

Angry Emotions - Your Child's and Yours

by Elizabeth Pantley, author of Perfect Parenting and Kid Cooperation

Q: My child can't control his angry emotions. He tends to lash out at others, verbally and physically. How can I help him stop getting so angry?

A: **Think about it:** As a parent educator, one of my most popular lectures is entitled "Understanding and Managing Your Anger." Ask yourself: "If hundreds of adults attend a class about anger management, how can I expect my child to learn how to control his anger on his own?"

Don't answer anger with anger: Avoid responding to your child's anger with anger of your own. Your anger will tend to escalate your child's sour mood. Instead, control your own anger first. (See Parent's Anger, below). Reply to your child in a calm, even-tempered voice. You will be better able to direct your child's actions, and you'll be modeling the behavior you wish to see in your child.

Good Ways/Bad Ways: Your child needs to learn that while angry emotions are normal, there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of dealing with them. You can help your child learn this by acknowledging the reason he's angry. Often, just knowing that you understand his feelings can calm him down. As an example, what if your child is angry because his brother took his bike without asking, and he's shouting and swearing? Calmly acknowledge the reason for his anger by saying something like: "I know it's frustrating when Alex takes your things without asking." This will often cause a pause in your child's behavior, as he ponders this new response from you.

Next, ask a question that directs your child's thinking in a more productive way: "How do you think you can get him to remember to ask?" If he responds in an angry way, prompt him in a more positive direction: "Getting angry won't get your point across. What do you think will?" Stay with him and guide him through the resolution process.

Time Out: If a child's angry behavior is out of line, immediately stop him and send him to his room to cool off. Don't try to deal with the behavior at the peak of his anger. Later, when he's calmed down, take the time to let him know, specifically, what he did that you disapprove of. Engage him in a conversation to develop a plan for avoiding the behavior in the future.

Teach: Talk to your child about his anger. Tell him that it's important for him to learn how to control his temper. Suggest that the first thing he needs to do is learn to get control of himself before he does or says things that are inappropriate. Let your child know, in advance, that next time he explodes in anger you'll help him by asking him to go to his room to cool off. Advise him that if he doesn't immediately do as asked he would lose a privilege for the rest of the day, such as using the telephone, watching TV or playing with friends.

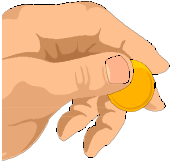
Have a plan: Help your child develop an "anger control plan." At a quiet time, have a discussion about anger. Brainstorm to come up with a list of things he can do when he feels himself losing control. As an example, he could put on his headphones and listen to music, go outside and throw a few basketballs, or take a shower. Have him write down the ideas on an index card and put them in a handy place. Encourage and support him when he uses some of the ideas. You might choose a code word that you can use to let him know his anger is getting out of control and he needs a cooling off period. Either he or you can use the word to signal a pause in the conversation, and allow him time to get himself together.

For more great information on childhood issues,

visit
www.iparenting.com

MCFPA Membership Form

for July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003



Please fill out, fold in thirds, place in an envelope, and mail with payment to:
Fostering Communications, P.O. Box 10006, Gaithersburg, MD 20898-006

Amount Due: \$10 per foster family

Date: _____ Check # _____ *(Do not send cash)*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

Best time to call _____

E-mail address _____

Topics and/or speakers you would like to see at our meetings: _____

Comments or suggestions: _____



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