



Geauga County Job & Family Services Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Newsletter



September is Grandparent Month

Kinship care is becoming a more common family arrangement. Research has shown many positive benefits to children being raised by kin. Children in kinship care generally have greater placement stability, better school attendance, better academic performance, and fewer community problems (i.e. unruly or delinquent incidents).

Although kinship caregivers do not receive a per diem, there are basic supports available in Ohio:

- ◆ Cash assistance through the Ohio Works First Child Only Grant, which is \$268 per month for one child and an additional amount per month per sibling,
- ◆ Medicaid health insurance through the Healthy Start Program is typically available to children in kinship care,
- ◆ Financial assistance in the amount of \$1700 over a three-year period is available to qualifying kinship caregivers who have legal custody or guardianship of children the Kinship Permanency Incentive Program.

The *Power of Attorney* and *Caregiver Authorization Affidavit* are available to **grandparents** who need to be able to access medical or mental health care for a grandchild temporarily in their care or to enroll the child in school.

The Ohio Grandparent/ Kinship Coalition www.ohiograndparentkinship.org, a non-profit group consisting of kinship caregivers, kinship care advocates, and agencies throughout the State of Ohio, was created to educate, advocate for, and support kinship care.



For more information about the above programs and forms, please contact Dawn Bates at Geauga County Job and Family Services, 440-285-9141, ext. 1102.

Save the Date

Join us at the **Great Geauga County Fair** on Sunday September 2, 2012 at 3:00 PM in the Junior Fair Building for the 11th annual **Diaper Dash**. Dashers should be 8 to 13 months old and will crawl, NOT walk, their way to victory. There is no cost to participate, just a diaper full of fun! Winners will crawl away with a trophy and a gift bag, and all participants will receive a gift bag valued at over \$30, courtesy of the Great Geauga County Fair & Jr. Fair Board. Come to the Jr. Fair building between 2 and 2:45 PM the day of the race to register.

There will be an **Information Meeting** for anyone interested in learning more about **Foster Care or Adoption**. The meeting will be held on Thursday, September 20, 2012, 6:00 PM, at the Geauga County Job and Family Services Building at 12480 Ravenwood Dr., Chardon. Please RSVP if you plan on attending. Ask for a Permanency Planning Worker at 440-285-9141.

Peace Lutheran Church's **Help Save a Dream** program assists area families that have been hit hard by the economy. A fund raising event has been planned for Saturday, September 8th, from 10:00 AM until 8:00 PM and will include food, activities, and entertainment. Contact Peace Lutheran at 440-286-1266 for additional information.

Geauga County Friends of CASA for Kids will hold it's **6th annual Kids' Safety Day** on Saturday, September 15th from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM at Century Village in Burton Village. The event features safety education, demonstrations and entertainment. Pre-register at www.geaugacasa.org to be entered for prizes to be drawn the day of the event.

A **Financial Literacy Workshop** series is being offered free to Geauga County Residents. The workshops will consist of a variety of topics including Improving Your Credit Score, Creating a Personal Budget, Teaching Kids About Money, Communicating About Money, Developing a Savings Plan, and Identity Theft. Contact Sara Shininger, Community Support Coordinator, 440-285-9141, ext. 1263 for information or to register for a workshop.

Respite

We all know that there are times that we need a break from our kids. This is called Respite. Below are a few resources that we are aware of that can be contacted.

- ◆ Akron YMCA has respite weekends for children with disabilities. For dates and more information go to <http://akronymca.org/RotaryCampRespiteWeekends.aspx>
- ◆ Camp Nuhop has developed 3 respite weekends. For more information go to http://www.campnuhop.org/Camp_Nuhop-RespiteApp_2011.pdf
- ◆ We have found a website that seems to have a lot to offer families with children of all ages and abilities. The site is www.care.com. On this site you can look for respite, tutors, housecleaning, special needs care and more. So take a look and see if there is anything that could benefit your family.
- ◆ Breathe Fellowship Church in Chagrin Falls does a monthly respite Friday night. This allows parents a night out. For more information go to www.breathefellowship.com.



Are you willing to provide respite for a family in need? A poll was taken a few months back to determine the interest in families providing respite for one another. Most of the responses were to “ask again later.” In order to meet the needs of our caregivers, GCJFS is trying to establish a resource list of respite providers that can be utilized by other caregivers when respite is needed. If you are interested in being a part of that resource list or have any questions, please contact Amy Buresch at 440-285-1224 or email her at buresa@odjfs.state.oh.us. Please respond by October 1, 2012. Thank you.

TBRI Tip - Helping Your Child Relax

The following was taken from the book “The Connected Child” by Karyn Purvis, Ph.D., David Cross, Ph. D., and Wendy Sunshine. The Connected child is now part of our lending library. Additional copies may also be found at your local library.

Quick Ways to Help a Child Relax

- ◆ Get down to her level physically, by kneeling or sitting
- ◆ Speak softly and gently in a warm voice.
- ◆ Offer a stress ball or a fidget toy that he can press and squeeze.
- ◆ Offer a piece of bubble gum. (Chewing is calming)
- ◆ Offer a sweet sucking candy or lollipop. (Sucking is calming)
- ◆ Offer to sit or stand farther away from her.
- ◆ Encourage him to take deep, slow breaths.



Child Spotlight of the Month Brittany — DOB May 31, 1995



Brittany is a friendly 17 year old who is not afraid to speak her mind. She likes baby dolls, horses, coloring in coloring books and jewelry. Brittany is in the 10th grade. She did well in the 9th grade and was able to have a job working in the school cafeteria. Brittany is on an IEP and learns at a “significant slower pace than her peers”. Brittany has an IQ of 62. She has been assessed for competency through the juvenile court and has been found to be incompetent. Brittany will be assessed for an IO Waiver by the County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

Brittany has been involved in the child welfare system on and off since birth. Her birth history includes physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. She was adopted at the age of 15 and her adoption disrupted. Brittany is doing well in her current residential placement.

The agency is looking for an adoptive home for Brittany who can support her well into adulthood, as Brittany may need an Adult Assisted Living Facility. If you are interested in hearing more about Brittany or feel you can give her the support she needs, please contact Amy Buresch at 440-285-9141 ext.1224.

E-Track is Now Available

Adoptive Parents and Foster Caregivers E-Track is now available to you! We encourage you to register for classes online through E-Track. There are several advantages to registering online through E-Track.

As an Adoptive Parent or Foster Caregiver you can:

- ◆ Sign up for classes at your convenience – 24/7
- ◆ Receive an email confirmation after you register
- ◆ Receive an email reminder one week prior to your scheduled class
- ◆ Complete your evaluation survey online
- ◆ Receive your certificate via email to you after your survey is returned
- ◆ Access and print your training record anytime



If you don't have computer access at home or work, your local library has a computer you can use. If you don't have an email address, you will still have an E-Track record that contains your training history. With the introduction of E-Track, there will no longer be a listing of trainings included in this newsletter.

Without email/internet access, you will need to contact your Regional Training Center at 330-379-2003 to register for training, complete surveys, receive certificates and receive printouts of your training history.

Go to the Adoptive Parent/Foster Caregiver E-Track Training Page: <http://www.ocwtp.net/e-track/CgTrng.html> and start learning today!

Fall Training Blitz! Thursday, October 25th through Saturday, October 27th in the Summit County Education Building. Register on E-Track today.

A Grandparents Story

When Sue moved to Geauga County with her young daughter and the three grandchildren in her custody, she had no support in the community and no knowledge of what services were available to her. Sue gained custody of her grandchildren, ages 6, 7, and 7, after Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services removed the children from their parents due to neglect.

Sue felt that she was in over her head and was struggling with all of her responsibilities. Coming from a generation who believes that asking for help is a sign of weakness, Sue was reluctant to seek help. However, Sue reached out to the guidance counselor at the children's school. That action by Sue is what got the ball rolling. The family was then referred to the Kinship Navigator Program offered through Geauga County Job and Family Services. This program offers information and support to families who are caring for a relative's child. The first step was to help Sue understand that she is not alone, that there is help available and that helping the caregiver ultimately helps the child. As a social worker with the Kinship Navigator Program, I made a visit to Sue's home and we worked together to decide what help she needed. Sue's most pressing concern was her financial situation. Her husband had passed away the previous year not only leaving her as a single parent, but also leaving her deep in debt. We tackled that issue first by having Sue apply for financial assistance that is available to kinship caregivers. Once Sue felt that some of the pressure was off, we were able to prioritize her other concerns.

I was able to help arrange for Sue's family to receive Christmas gifts for the family, holiday food, Easter baskets for the children, gift cards to Giant Eagle for groceries and assistance with clothing for the children, medical coverage for the children, and arrangements for all four children to attend a ten-day summer camp at no cost to the family. The most important thing Sue got out of this experience is learning that she can count on her community to help when her family is in need of support.

If you would like to receive more information about the Kinship Navigator Program offered through Geauga County Job and Family Services, please contact Dawn Bates at 440-285-9141 ext. 1102.

Family or Locker Message Board

Materials:

- ◆ Sheet of Styrofoam (3/4 inch thick)
- ◆ Piece of fabric (3 inches larger on all sides than Styrofoam)
- ◆ Hot glue and glue gun
- ◆ Ribbon



Tools: Knife, scissors, ruler

Optional additions:

- ◆ Buttons, ribbon roses (which can be used as decoration)
- ◆ Tacks (not required but can be used as it is Styrofoam)
- ◆ Magnet strip (Great for back of small locker size boards)
 1. Lay fabric face down on hard surface. Lay Styrofoam centered on fabric. Glue fabric onto one of the longer edges of the Styrofoam and let glue cool. Glue the fabric on to the opposite side, pulling the fabric tight so it is smooth on the front side.

2. Fold up and glue the two shorter ends like you were wrapping a gift. If you like you can cover the back with fabric or felt to cover the raw edges; however this might make it harder to hang.
3. Once the fabric is glued in place you can add the ribbon as you please. While the ribbon is not necessary, it is functional. Messages and photos can simply be tucked between the message board and the ribbons to hold them in place without leaving holes from the tacks.
4. The best technique for larger boards is to make a grid pattern, spacing the ribbon a few inches apart. With smaller boards, you might just want to add ribbons to the corners.
5. You can decorate your message board by gluing buttons, ribbon rose, etc. If you want to use tacks, you can decorate the tops of the tacks as well.
6. For Locker board, magnet strips are placed on the back.

Recipes

Apple Cartwheels

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1/4 cup *peanut butter*
- ◆ 1/2 cup *miniature semisweet chocolate chips*
- ◆ 4 *medium unpeeled Red Delicious Apples, cored*
- ◆ 1-1/2 teaspoons *honey*
- ◆ 2 tablespoons *raisins*



Directions:

- ◆ In a small bowl, combine peanut butter and honey; fold in chocolate chips and raisins.
- ◆ Fill centers of apples with peanut butter mixture; refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Cut into 1/4-in. rings. **Yield:** about 2 dozen.



Potato Kielbasa Skillet

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 pound *red potatoes, cubed*
- ◆ 3 tablespoons *water*
- ◆ 1/2 cup *chopped onion*
- ◆ 3/4 pound *smoked kielbasa or Polish sausage, cut into 1/4-inch slices*
- ◆ 1 tablespoon *olive oil*
- ◆ 2 tablespoons *brown sugar*
- ◆ 2 tablespoons *cider vinegar*
- ◆ 1 tablespoon *Dijon mustard*
- ◆ 1/2 teaspoon *dried thyme*
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon *pepper*
- ◆ 4 cups *fresh baby spinach*
- ◆ 5 *bacon strips, cooked and crumbled*

Directions:

- ◆ Place potatoes and water in a microwave-safe dish. Cover and microwave on high for 4 minutes or until tender; drain.
- ◆ In a large skillet, sauté kielbasa and onion in oil until onion is tender. Add potatoes; sauté 3-5 minutes longer or until kielbasa and potatoes are lightly browned.
- ◆ Combine the brown sugar, vinegar, mustard, thyme and pepper; stir into skillet. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 2-3 minutes or until heated through. Add spinach and bacon; cook and stir until spinach is wilted. **Yield:** 4 servings.