



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



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



Geauga County works hand in hand to protect our children and preserve families by providing resources, support, knowledge and preventative services. In July 2013, we will be joining 59 Ohio Counties in implementing Alternative Response.

The primary role of any children services agency is to keep children safe and secure. We know that all families are not the same, and that the concerns that face one family may not be an issue for another. A primary role within Geauga County Job and Family Services is investigating reports of child abuse, neglect and dependency. Geauga County Job and Family Services uses a traditional model for investigating cases of child abuse, neglect and dependency.

In 2008, Ohio began a pilot program called Alternative Response, or Differential Response for investigating cases of child abuse, neglect and dependency. The program proved successful and we are currently in the process of preparing for implementation of Alternative Response. We are scheduled to begin using the Alternative Response model in July 2013.

Alternative Response is designed to help Ohio's child welfare agencies meet the needs of children and families. It is based on the belief that families can stay together if they receive the assistance they need when concerns occur. It will dismiss the labels of perpetrator and victim, which will avoid creating adversarial relationships with families and increase their voluntary engagement in services. This will create a partnership between families and caseworkers and is designed to ensure child safety and well-being by addressing the family's issues and potential solutions as early as possible.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Supreme Court of Ohio reviewed the findings of the Alternative Response pilot project in 2010.

Notable findings included:

- Child safety is not compromised with this approach; children who have come to the attention of the child protection agency are as safe with the alternative approach as they are with the investigation approach.
- Families that receive an alternative response approach were more satisfied with services they received than were families that received a traditional investigation.
- Subsequent reporting of families for child abuse and neglect declined under alternative response.

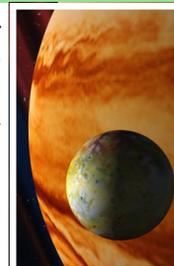
A major component of the Alternative Response model is collaborating with community providers on finding appropriate solutions and services for families. The agency is excited to be part of the Alternative Response model. It is our belief that we will be able to use the Alternative Response model to engage with families and work together to create a safe and healthy environment for the children of Geauga County.

New Day Camps Coming to Geauga Park District

Geauga Park District will be offering two new daytime camps: **Adventure Camp**, offering a week of outdoor adventure activities and **Space Camp**, where kids will learn about telescopes, astronomy, rockets and more. Day camps will be available early June through early August. These camps are made possible through the Chip Henry Institute for Outdoor Adventure, a special initiative established through Geauga Park District Foundation in memory of Judge Charles "Chip" Henry.

Day camps will run throughout the summer for age groups 10-12 years and 13-15 years old. Registration begins Monday, March 18. A fee of \$150 includes all activities, including special field trips. For more information or to register, contact Denise Wolfe at 440-279-0894.

If you know of a child who needs financial assistance to attend this or other Summer activities contact Sara Shininger 440-285-1263.



A Foster Parent's Story

Our family was asked what it was like to be foster parents for over 10 years. Well Here is how it all began:

It took 3 years for us to decide that this is something we truly wanted to do as a family. So in 1999 we started our classes and the hope was to adopt a little girl. We have 2 birth children of our own who were 16 and 10 at the time. When we started doing foster care we were appalled at how a mother or father could neglect their children. We were going to change these children's lives. We were going to show these parents how to be a good parent.

Well it turned out these parents taught us. The children taught us how to be better parents. There are a lot of families out there who do not have a support system like we do, some families don't know how to be a family. For years what they were taught has been generations of parenting that has been handed down to them through the years and that is how they learned to parent, Not knowing any other way they would neglect their children not really knowing a better way to be a mom or dad. We learned ways ourselves to be better parents to our own children. Better ways to discipline, show Love and Logic, what behavior is acceptable, and really what battles we want to pick with our children and which ones are not important.

Many people I have talked to have said : I could never be a foster parent because I would want to keep them all: well believe me there are some you just can't wait to be able to go home. That may sound mean but really, we all don't have the same likes and dislikes and many children will try your patients till you can no longer hang on. But you do hang on and you do help these families to the best of your abilities. Geauga County will help you do this. They have been a God sent to us many times.

Being a foster/adoptive parent we have had over 25 children come through our home, some just for a day or two and others stayed for a few months. Working with the birth parents has been a rewarding part of this journey. We are no longer foster parents as we thought after 10 years it was time for us.

And What about the little girl we wanted to adopt? Well when the time was right she found us. About 6 years into our experience as foster parents we had a birth mom and her little girl live with us. Birth mom could not parent as she was quiet and wanted to find a home for her little girl. About 4 years later we were blessed a second time with another little girl. Our girls are 10 and 6 now.

We would not have tried all the years of foster/adopt for anything. There was lots of pain/ sorrow/ sadness, happiness, but most important there was love and support for all involved. Our oldest explained it this way.....You do all you can to love and support these families and when its time for them to go, you let go with you hand...but they are always in your heart.

I hope you become a foster/adoptive parent.....It is an amazing gift to be able to love a child unconditionally.

Pastor family



Remember to Complete Your E-Track Survey

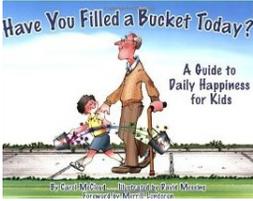
As of November 2012, when a training session is closed, those who are No-Shows and those who do not complete their evaluation surveys are identified as "Complete-No Evaluation". The NEORTC checks each session attendee to see if their survey is "detached". In doing this, the NEORTC is noticing a substantial number of attendees have their status "Survey-In Progress". **You must complete your survey and select "Finish"**. A screen will then appear where you have the choice to "Resume", "Save" or "Complete" your survey. The last important step in finishing your survey is to click on the "**Complete Survey**" link on the left hand side of this screen. This will "detach" your survey and it will be submitted. Unfortunately, when a session is closed, if that survey is still showing "In Progress", the NEORTC identifies that person as having a "Complete-No Evaluation" status.

Tax Information

For information regarding the current status of the **Federal Adoption Tax Credit** visit: <http://adoptiontaxcredit.org/faqs/> where you can download an informative fact sheet with frequently asked questions.

Free tax preparation is available for Geauga residents with annual household incomes less than \$60,000. Call 2-1-1 from your land line or cell phone to make an appointment. Sites for Geauga County residents only are: Chagrin Falls Park Community enter, Job & Family Services, St Mary's in Chardon and Geauga Metropolitan Housing Authority. Sponsored by the Geauga Financial Stability Partnership.

Have You Filled a Bucket?



The concept of 'bucket' filling is sweeping the country! Come experience Carol McCloud, national trainer and award winning author, as she discusses practical ways to help children and adults understand the concepts of spreading kindness and support to people around them and how to reduce bullying and negative behavior. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity on Saturday April 13, 2013 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. at Notre Dame Auditorium in Chardon Ohio. Sign up for this no cost training sponsored by Geauga and Lake County Job and Family Services and Starting Point at www.opdn.org.

Save the Date

The **5k race for Child Abuse Prevention** will be held Sunday, April 14th 9:00 a.m. at Punderson State Park. Registration forms can be found online at www.geaugajfs.org. Call Mark Clark at 440-285-9141 for more information.

Blue is the color chosen child abuse prevention. **Wear Blue April 10th** to show your support for those individuals that work with abused or neglected children and to support families that have been touched by child abuse. Look for the annual pinwheel display at Junction Auto representing the number of abuse and neglect cases investigated in 2012.



Don't miss **Kidsfest** Saturday, May 4th from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Metzenbaum Center. Enjoy a FREE fun-filled day of hands on activities, entertainment and refreshments.

Parenting Wisely



Parenting is not an easy job for anyone. Have you ever wondered:

- ◆ Why do children sometimes act the way they do?
- ◆ How can you encourage cooperation from your children?
- ◆ What will improve family relationships?

Parenting Wisely is a free program proven to help establish positive, consistent and effective parenting skills. The program sessions will be held on Thursday evenings from 5:30—8:00 p.m. on March 14th, March 21, April 11 and April 18th. Participants will receive **Free dinner and Free onsite childcare**. All sessions are held at Geauga County Job and Family Services, 12480 Ravenwood Drive, Chardon, Ohio 44024.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Shauna Rich by email srich78@gmail.com or phone/text 440-655-8985. Be sure to include the number of children in need of childcare when you RSVP.

Pre-Service & Ongoing Training Opportunities

The following Pre-Service courses will be offered at GCJFS. Contact Amy Buresch at 440-285-1224 to register.

March 2, 2013	905	Managing Behavior
	906	Preventing and De-Escalating Crisis
March 9, 2013	907	Cultural Issues in Placement
	908	Understanding Primary Families
March 16, 2013	909	Children Who have Been Sexually Abused
	910	The Effects of Caregiving on the Caregiving Family
March 23, 2013	911	Permanency for Children
	912	Permanency for Families

Ongoing Training—**Sign up through E-Track**

March 26, 2013	6-9PM	Fostering Physical and Emotional Health in the Caregiver
March 28, 2013	6-9PM	Effectively Dealing with Children's Issues in Visitation



Craft—Water Bottle Bowling

Materials:

- ◆ 10 plastic water bottles, all the same size (we used .5L/15.9 oz size). Make sure they are dry & empty.
- ◆ Felt or fabric totaling about 4 sheets. (We used various scrap and eco felt in 4 different colors.)
- ◆ Felt numbers (We used eco felt numbers.)
- ◆ Glue (We used hot glue but craft glue will also work.)
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Hot glue gun and pinking sheers optional (Hot glue worked the best to keep felt from peeling off after use)



Directions:

1. Save or collect at least 10 water bottles of the same size. Make sure they are dry and empty.
2. Cut 10 strips of felt (or fabric) about 10" long x 2" wide.
3. Find something circular about 2" in diameter. Cut around or trace & cut.
4. Cut 10 circles.
5. Lay out your strips and circles. Come up with the color combinations you like best.
6. Place hot glue all around the label and lay the felt strip on top. When you reach the other end, place a small amount of glue on the edge of the top of the felt strip. Cover with the other end of your felt strip and trim off any excess. School glue works as well but will need more drying time. If using adhesive felt, simply remove the backing and place around the bottle.
7. Place felt strips on all 10 water bottles. Keep your circles matched up with bases you choose for your color combinations.
8. Glue on the circles.
9. Allow bases to dry. Hot glue should only take a minute or so. If using school/craft glue allow for a bit more drying time.
10. Now add your numbers. We used self adhesive precut numbers or create your own, cut out and glue on and have fun!

Helpful Hint: To make the bowling harder, add sand, beans, colored sand or glitter to the bottles.

Peanut Butter Hot Dogs



Ingredients:

- ◆ 2Tbl. Peanut Butter
- ◆ 2 Slices whole wheat bread
- ◆ 1 Banana peeled

Directions:

Spread a tablespoon of peanut butter onto one side of each slice of bread. Break the banana into two pieces, and place one half onto the center of each peanut buttered bread slice. Wrap the bread around each banana and eat like a hot dog!

The Italian Irishman

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 T olive oil
- ◆ 1 Pound bulk Italian sausage
- ◆ 2 T Sausage drippings
- ◆ 2 T margarine
- ◆ 2 apples, cored and sliced
- ◆ 1 large onion, sliced
- ◆ Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- ◆ 1 t dried oregano
- ◆ 1 T flour
- ◆ 1 cup water
- ◆ 3 cups prepared mashed potatoes
- ◆ 1 T melted margarine

Directions:

1. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish.
2. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir Italian sausage until browned and crumbly, about 10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer sausage to prepared casserole dish. Drain drippings and reserve 2 Tbl. of drippings
3. Melt 2 tablespoons margarine in a separate skillet over medium heat; cook and stir apple and onion slices until tender, about 8 minutes. Place apple and onion in casserole dish with sausage.
4. Stir sausage, apple, and onion together; season with salt, pepper, and oregano.
5. Brown flour in reserved drippings in skillet over medium heat. Whisk water into flour until thick gravy forms, about 3 minutes.
6. Pour gravy over sausage mixture in the casserole dish; spread mashed potatoes over the top with a spoon, creating peaks. Lightly brush mashed potatoes with 1 tablespoon melted margarine.
7. Bake in the preheated oven until the potatoes are lightly browned and the sausage mixture is bubbling, about 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees