

YOU are important, YOU are valued and YOU make a difference!

Every new year brings about the chance to make changes and often we strive to make positive changes that will improve our situation. Whether you have goals for eating better, getting organized or some other improvements this is certainly the time of year we reflect on this most. At Child and Family Charities, we like to take a moment and reflect on all the changes that have occurred over the past year and how we can improve things for the next. Our organization continues to grow through adding new programs, hiring new staff and focusing on making improvements where necessary so that we can provide the highest quality care to children and families in our community while also providing exceptional customer-service to everyone we meet. From the Child Welfare Division of Child and Family Charities, we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all that you as foster parents do on behalf of vulnerable children and their families. YOU are important, YOU are valued and YOU make a difference!

Foster Parents: THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW! With the new year and opportunity for new changes, here are a few things you need to know starting in 2016:

- **PAYMENTS:** All foster parents are required to “register” with the DHHS Contract & Payment Express system at www.michigan.gov/cpexpress. We understand this can be a bit confusing because Child and Family Charities’ foster parents are not paid from DHHS but paid from our agency directly. It still does not matter. DHHS requires that all licensed foster parents REGISTER on this system. This is necessary in the event that there are any payment issues to be corrected as this is the ONLY way DHHS can resolve those issues. DHHS is directly responsible for reimbursing our agency so that we may forward foster care payments to you. It is important that you register online and verify that you have done so to your licensing worker. Many of you have already done this or needed to do this for one reason or another and we thank you for that! For everyone else, PLEASE be sure you complete the registration. An instruction sheet is included with this newsletter with detailed instructions and contact information if you need help!
- **PAYMENTS AGAIN!** Child and Family Charities is now offering DIRECT DEPOSIT of foster parent checks! This does not apply to all financial assistance you may receive; however, for the monthly foster care payments you receive when a child is placed in your home, the payments can be directly deposited into your bank account. Please contact your licensing worker to complete the necessary form for these arrangements.
- **PAYMENTS YET AGAIN!!!** If you have any questions about your foster care payments or are missing any payments, PLEASE contact your child’s assigned case manager. Staff in our financial department who manage the payments should not be receiving calls and do not have the authority to make payment adjustments without going through the caseworker first. Please please please be sure you are communicating all payment concerns with either your caseworker, the licensing worker and/or a child welfare supervisor. We are here to help!

New Foster Parent Orientation:

Do you know someone who might be interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent? Orientations are held every other Monday from 6:00-8:00pm at CFC. The next dates of orientation are **February 8 and 22**. Contact Linda Rathbun at 517-882-4000 ext. 140 to RSVP.



DIRECT DEPOSIT AND EMAIL

One of the biggest changes for our agency is being able to move to direct deposit for foster parents. Typically, we have been sending out checks each month and including a printed copy of this newsletter. All of our newsletters (including archived editions) have been available on our website at www.childandfamily.org We want to encourage you all to view the monthly newsletter via our website. Child and Family Charities spent most of 2015 revamping the website to update it and make it very user friendly! We hope these improvements will help us communicate more effectively with you and with the community. We also hope that these technology advances will also help you share things with your social media networks such as needs we may have, good things happening and our need for foster parents.

REMEMBER: As a licensed foster family, when you refer someone to become a foster parent, you will receive \$300 for that referral once the new family becomes licensed!

- As we advance in the technological world, we would like to **begin sending some communications via e-mail**. We realize that not everyone desires communications this way or has access to do so; however, we would love to be able to have faster and more efficient ways to communicate with all of you. Our agency over 90 licensed foster families. In this line of work, there are often so many changes happening and we want to be able to give you resources, tools and updates more efficiently. We will be sensitive to your individual communication needs so we will be sure to find ways to communicate the important changes in a way that we know will reach you. In addition to this – we want to continue to develop our e-mail database and begin sharing other significant and helpful information to you more efficiently. If you have any changes to your contact information, including your e-mail, please be sure to let your licensing worker know!

Reactive Attachment Disorder Support Group

The Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) Support Group has been meeting for over 13 years. New families are always welcome to join– both foster and adoptive families can attend. The group typically meets on the 4th Monday of each month at the agency from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Dinner is served potluck style, and if families register ahead of time, childcare may be provided. The next meeting will be held on December 28th.

Please RSVP to Korey Wheeler at 517-882-4000 Ext. 133 or koreywheeler@childandfamily.org



RELATIVELY SPEAKING...

Relatively speaking is a section of our newsletter that is dedicated to those of you who are raising relative children who are in foster care. We first want to recognize that this experience is often much different for you than for other foster parents. Your role is sometimes unplanned or unexpected. You may have not considered or had the desire to be licensed but in order to provide the care and love to your family member, you came forward and walked through the process. Whatever the reason for care, you are important and need support just like anyone else. Michigan State University offers a support center for families like yours called the Kinship Care Resource Center. You can find out more information by calling 1-800-535-1218 or sending an e-mail at kinship@msu.edu