



Foster Care Cluster Newsletter Spring 2011



A Message to Delaware's DFS Foster Care Parents

Dear Foster Parents,

Thank you for your commitment to fostering our children who have in some way been abused or neglected. Now that we are moving into the spring and the end of school year, I would like to share some thoughts and friendly reminders with you. Our children are Delaware's most vulnerable and need loving and committed families. If you have a child in your home whose parental rights have been terminated, please consider making that child a permanent member of your family. We encourage you to provide our children with an atmosphere to succeed by supporting them in extra-curricular activities, music, arts, sports etc.

Please be reminded it is our duty and responsibility to know where our children are at all times. If a child in your home is not accounted for, you should contact the case worker and police, this includes notifying those parties when a child is on runaway. We expect our children to be safe in foster care and provided the highest quality of care possible; anything less is unacceptable. If you know of any foster family who does not commit to this philosophy please contact your foster home coordinator supervisor to advise them of your concerns.

In closing, I want to encourage you to attend the Foster Parent Recognition Breakfast scheduled June 4, 2011 at the Duncan Center in Dover. It is a small gesture to recognize you for the special work you do. Remember...Our Children, Our Future, Our Responsibility.

Sincerely,

John Bates

Foster Care Program Manager

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“Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.”

William Jennings Bryan

Question Corner

Do you have a question that you would like answered in the Cluster Newsletter? We would like to answer it! Email Kate Gallagher at kathryn.gallagher@state.de.us and we will put your question in the Cluster Newsletter!

Q: What is NYTD and how does it help foster care youth?

A: NYTD or the *National Youth in Transition Database* is a data collection system developed to track the independent living services provided to youth and the outcomes of certain youth at specified ages. NYTD was created to measure how successful states are in preparing youth as they transition from foster care to independent living. The information gathered will assist each state in making necessary improvements to service delivery as needed. Each state is required to report to NYTD four types of information about youth: services provided to youth, youth characteristics, outcomes and basic demographics. NYTD has two primary components.

Part I- The DFS caseworkers are responsible for the reporting of independent living services provided to youth in foster care, 14 yrs and older and not yet assigned to work with an independent living provider. Caseworkers will report on each of the 11 categories (on a monthly basis):

- Independent living needs
- Academic support
- Post secondary educational support
- Career preparation
- Employment programs or vocational training
- Budget and financial management
- Housing education and home management raining
- Health education and risk prevention
- Family support and healthy marriage education
- Mentoring
- Supervised independent living

Part II – For this component of NYTD, youth who are in foster care and turning 17 years of age during one of the two NYTD reporting periods (October 1, 2010 thru March 31, 2011 or April 1, 2011 thru September 30, 2011) are issued a survey by their DFS caseworker or independent living worker. This survey identifies experiences the youth has encountered in the following areas:

- financial self-sufficiency
- educational attainment
- positive adult connections
- experience with homelessness
- high-risk behaviors
- access to health insurance

**DFS caseworkers or Independent living workers are responsible for supplying youth with the survey and entering the information into the NYTD database system.

How can foster parents help?

For children 14 yrs and older....

Remember, you don't have to be a caseworker in order to provide services. By encouraging youth to complete day to day tasks in and around the home you are providing them with life skills. Share any efforts you make to strengthen a child's daily living skills with your individual caseworker.

For youth turning 17 yrs old within one of the two NYTD reporting periods.....

Make yourself available to assist youth in answering questions on the NYTD outcome survey. Whether it's helping youth to recall specific services they may have received or if it simply rephrasing a question for clarity.

Adolescents in Foster Care Teen Groups

Teens are empowered to assume responsibility for planning their future. Self advocacy and goal setting are tools used to maximize their strengths, talents, and aspirations. Exercises are geared toward changing the thinking and practices that hinder a youth's: transition to independence; culture of low expectations; lack of accountability for their own successes or failures; etc.

The topic for both Teen Support Groups (girls/boys) is ***Tools for Your Box***. The focus/purpose is to encourage teens' success as adults. The support groups will be held for those 13 and older.

Teen Boys Group

DFS University Plaza Office

263 Chapman Rd., Large conference room, Newark, DE 19702

Facilitator: John Bates/J.L. Williams

Teen Girls Group

DFS University Plaza Office

263 Chapman Rd., Large conference room, Newark, DE 19702

Facilitator: Waverney Herbert

Limited van transportation is available to youth whose foster parents cannot arrange drop off and pick up responsibilities. The meetings are held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., every two weeks on alternate Thursdays. Refreshments and light "teen friendly" foods (pizza, wings, and soft drinks) will be served.

Please contact Latasha Brown at 778-6502 to provide the name, age, and contact information of youth who plan to participate.



Join Your Cluster Today!

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

Hockessin, Pike Creek, & Stanton

Vacant

North Wilmington & Claymont

Vacant

South Wilmington

Peg Draper - 399-8779

Mary Bradley - 655-5421

Newark

Vacant

Bear

Brenda Gregory—365-5532

Middletown, Townsend, & Odessa

Vacant

New Castle

Debbie Santos - 326-2245

KENT COUNTY

Smyrna

Pam Barr - 399-6847

Camden

Elliot & Lela Hardin - 697-7538

North Dover

Joshua and Anna Forston - 335-0831

South Dover

Bernadette Reynolds - 302-659-0242

SUSSEX COUNTY

Seaford

Monica Sheets - 628-3586

Lincoln

Norma Larrimore - 422-0576

Greenwood

Vacant

Bridgeville

Toya Roberts—337-8544

Do you have some extra time and think you may want to be a cluster leader?

If you are interested, call your Foster Care Coordinator today!

Reminder

To All Foster Parents,

Please take notice of the following action taken today by the Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding drop side cribs. I urge that all parents and child care providers be alerted to this and take action immediately to protect children. This is very preliminary information but in the urgency of saving lives it seemed most prudent to get the message out.

Parents and Providers who are using drop-side cribs are advised to check the hardware on the cribs to be certain it's working properly and to make sure their crib has not been recalled. The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, which represents over 90 percent of the crib industry, says properly assembled drop-sides that haven't been recalled can be safely used.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has voted to ban the manufacture, sale and resale of the cribs, which have a side rail that moves up and down, allowing parents to more easily lift their child from the crib. In all, drop-side cribs have been blamed in the deaths of at least 32 infants and toddlers since 2000 and are suspected in another 14 infant fatalities. In the past five years, more than 9 million drop-side cribs have been recalled, including cribs from big-name companies such as Evenflo, Delta Enterprise Corp., and Pottery Barn Kids. *The new standard requiring cribs to have fixed sides* would take effect in June. The move by CPSC would also prohibit hotels and childcare centers from using drop-sides, though those facilities would have a year to purchase new cribs.

More information is provided at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml11/11179.html>



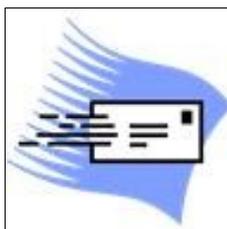
Reduced Cost YMCA Memberships



The Delaware YMCA is proud to offer FOSTERING FUTURES: a Foster Care Financial Assistance Program. Through this program, foster families are able to obtain a YMCA membership at a greatly reduced cost. See your Foster Care Coordinator for more information and join today!

Did you know you can receive Foster Care information by email?

DFS has formed a list serve of foster parents so we can send out important information as soon as we get it. This could be everything from a Cluster meeting reminder to a summer camp opportunity to a free training session. Don't miss out on this chance; send your name and email address to Kate Gallagher at kathryn.gallagher@state.de.us to be added today!



Is your emergency information up to date? Have you, or any of your emergency contacts, recently moved?



Please make sure your Foster Care Coordinator is aware of any changes within your emergency contact listings for the Division of Family Services. In the event of a statewide emergency, this information is needed in order to ensure that everyone is safe.

Recruitment Contest

Remember, foster parents who refer a new foster parent to DFS will receive a \$100 bonus once the new foster parent has been approved and provides one month of satisfactory service as a foster parent. The Cluster with the most referrals and the person with the most approved referrals will win a prize.

The contest deadline is December 31, 2011. Winners will be chosen at that time. All questions about the contest may be directed to 633-2657.

News Flash!



Extra! Extra! Read All About It! News You Can Use!

1. Free Lunch

Per the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, all children in foster care are eligible for free meals in school, including breakfast, lunch and snack.

The **Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010** (the Act), P.L. 111-296, provides categorical eligibility for free meals to children in foster care. On January 31, 2011 the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), issued a memorandum (attached) to Regional Directors of Special Nutrition Programs and State Directors of Child Nutrition Programs to provide guidance on the implementation of this provision of that legislation.



Section 102 of the Act was amended to provide categorical eligibility for free meals, without further application, to any child in foster care under the placement and care of the State agency or who is placed by a court with a caretaker household. This provision does not apply to informal arrangements that are made outside of the State or court sanctioned systems. School food authorities and other child nutrition institutions are being strongly encouraged to establish formal mechanisms with State and local foster care agencies to facilitate the necessary certification for free meals for children in foster care. This provision is effective October 1, 2010.

2. Attending Therapy



The Foster Parent Program would like to remind you that if you attend therapy with your foster child(ren), the hours involved may count towards in-service training. Please let your Foster Care Coordinator know if you have accrued hours for attending counseling with the child(ren) in your care.

3. Head Start

Foster Parents please be reminded, children in foster care who meet the program age requirements are automatically eligible for Head start and Early Head Start Programs, please ensure foster children in your home who meet the age requirement are enrolled in Head start or Early Head Start. If you have questions contact your foster home coordinator.





Sexting – What Every Teen Needs to Know

What is Sexting?

Sexting is sending or forwarding nude, sexually suggestive, or explicit pictures on your cell phone or online. Once these images are sent, they spread rapidly and are available for anyone and everyone to view.

Once you press “send,” you are no longer in control of the distribution of the image; it is out there 4ever and the potential audience is limitless. First, it is sent to your boyfriend or girlfriend, then to your circle of friends, then to you entire school, and continues on...

Remember: Send is 4ever!

Sexting is a problem when.....

The person posing is under the age of 18 years old.

Peer pressure is involved.

Coercion occurs.

The picture goes VIRAL.

Circumstances of the picture taken are unknown.

Consequences of Sexting

It's ILLEGAL

Taking or sending a sexually suggestive photo of yourself or anyone else can result in criminal charges!

You may be charged with producing, distributing, or possessing child pornography.

Producing Child Pornography if you are in the image

Distributing Child Pornography if you forward the image

Possession of Child Pornography if you have the image on your cell phone or computer

If you distribute sexually suggestive photos of yourself or others, you may be charged with sex offenses and placed on the **sex offender registry**, which has negative and lasting consequences that may affect all areas of your life including future employment, acceptance into college or the military, and dictates where you can/cannot live.

Social and Emotional Consequences

Feelings of shame, embarrassment, depression

A damaged reputation

Contributing to the emotional pain of another

What to do if you receive a Sext?

REPORT IT.

Reporting the image may protect you from criminal charges and protects the person in the image from further embarrassment and emotional distress. Reporting the image is not snitching. You're doing the right thing by stopping the cruelty involved in ruining someone's reputation....you may even be saving a life and your future!

How to Report Sexting:

Go online to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) @ www.ncmec.org and report to the **CyberTipline** or call the Hotline at 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

OR

Tell a trusted teacher, parent, or adult who can report it

OR

Call your local or state police

If you are sent or view an explicit photo on Facebook or another social networking site, make sure to report the image.

Resources for Families:

Delaware Attorney General's Office

Website: www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov

Wilmington Office (302) 577-8500

Dover Office (302) 739-4211

Georgetown Office (302) 856-5353

Local and State Police

National center for Missing and Exploited Children

www.ncmec.org or 1(800) 843-5678

Delaware child Predator Task Force
(302) 739-2030

The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

www.kids.delaware.gov (302) 633-2657

Websites

www.safekids.org

www.safeteens.com

www.ikeepsafe.org

This article is courtesy of the State of Delaware website: http://kids.delaware.gov/pdfs/sexting_adult%20toolkit_6-21.pdf

Teens & Sexting: What Parents Need to Know

Pose with your friends for your iPhone-loving date, who instantly uploads it via Facebook mobile, and you have a memory to enjoy forever — or a permanently ruined reputation. Even adults can live to regret something that lands online or is forwarded inappropriately. But "sexting" (sending or receiving of sexually explicit or sexually suggestive images or video via a cell phone) is largely a youth phenomenon.

Whether through sexting or other unwisely used online/interactive communications, adolescents are taking, sending, and receiving nude pictures and sexual content. But the short-term thrills, often done under social pressure or after a few drinks, are outlived by the potentially damaging consequences.

How common is it? Parents are likely to be shocked:

- A 2009 poll found that 1 in 5 teens — guys and girls — sent sexually suggestive pictures via text; and many have received such images, which often originally were sent to someone else. These numbers are even higher when including written sexual content (39% of all teens).
- A 2008 study by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy estimated that 22% of teenage girls said they had sent or posed for nude or semi-nude photos.
- Another poll found that 44% of high school boys had seen at least one naked picture of a female classmate.



Whether these statistics turn out to be accurate or overblown, inappropriate sharing of personal photos does seem to be common — and for parents, understandably worrisome. Why do they do it? Many young women cite "pressure from guys" as the reason they send or pose for sexually suggestive pictures or texts, and guys sometimes blame "pressure from friends." But for some, it's almost become normal behavior, a way of flirting, or "not a big deal." And they get some reinforcement for that when lewd celebrity pictures and videos go mainstream and the consequences are greater fame and reality TV shows, not ruined careers or humiliation.

So besides educating themselves about what their kids are transmitting, parents need to get kids — whose decision-making skills, judgment, and ideas about privacy are still being formed — to understand that even if their intentions are playful or harmless, if messages or pictures become public, the results can be anything but.

What This Means to You

One of the prime responsibilities of parents is to teach their kids how to take responsibility for their own safety and their own actions. Some instant technologies with long-lasting consequences make that tougher — typical childhood and teen experimentation that went unrecorded in the past now can be captured forever. Sexting is a good example of that.

It can be hard for teens to grasp the permanent consequences of their ever-changing tech interactions. Just as they might not consider how smoking now can cause long-term health problems down the road, they can be reluctant to curb their "share everything" tendencies now for the sake of their reputations later. So it's crucial for parents to talk to their kids about how the seemingly fleeting nature of racy pictures, videos, emails, and text messages doesn't match the reality of their permanence in cyberspace.

One ill-considered pic sent to a crush's phone easily can be forwarded to the recipient's friends, posted online, or printed and distributed. Even intense peer pressure to take or send nude pictures will pale in comparison with the public humiliation that follows when the images land on Facebook or the cell phones of hundreds of other kids and even adults.

(“Teens and Sexting: What this Means To You” continued from page 9)

So how can you get through to your kids? The answer is to have open conversations about personal responsibility, personal boundaries, and how to resist peer pressure. Conversations like this should occur throughout kids' lives — not just when problems emerge.

Explain to your kids, early and often, that once an image or message is sent, it is no longer in their control and cannot be taken back. It can, and likely will, spread beyond their control.

And don't overlook the potential for legal consequences. Regional laws haven't necessarily kept up with technology, with most intended for dealing with child pornographers, not high schoolers with smart phones. In Texas, for instance, some offenses call for 2 to 10 years in prison or fines up to \$10,000. So, in theory, a teen could face felony charges for texting explicit photos or even have to register as a sex offender.

More likely, though, is the fallout that follows when a parent, teacher, friend, or loved one receives a forwarded text with compromising content. Your kids should understand that messages or pictures sent via the Internet or cell phones are never truly private or anonymous.

Beyond that, questionable behavior gone viral can haunt a college applicant or prospective employee years later. More and more colleges and employers check online profiles looking for indications of a candidate's suitability — or giant red flags about bad judgment and immaturity.

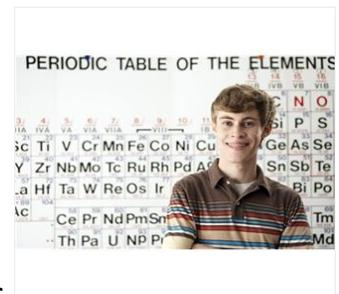
In the meantime, parents can make it clear that there will be consequences if their kids are caught sexting, such as confiscation of cell phones and netbooks or close monitoring of their use.

This article is courtesy of: http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/issues_2011/2011_sexting.html

21st Century Fund



School is in session and summer break is almost here! Wouldn't it be great if the child you are caring for was able to get tutoring assistance or take music or karate lessons? With the help of the 21st Century Fund for Delaware's Children, those dreams are possible! This fund provides experiences that help children define their strengths, improve their self esteem and build a sense of hope for the future. The goal is to help a child achieve



their potential in a particular talent or interest otherwise not affordable or available to them. And the best part is - ALL children in foster care are eligible! If you're interested in obtaining these funds for the child(ren) in your care, please contact your worker to complete the necessary form. Requests of up to \$100 will be considered when funds are available. Make your child's request today! For more information, visit: www.21childrensfund.org or <http://kids.delaware.gov/information/donate21stcenturyfund.shtml>



YOUR CHILD AND THE INTERNET

The web has many rich educational and cultural resources to offer your child. However, it is also contains sites that promote hatred, bigotry, violence and drugs or contain sexually explicit material.

BROWSING THE INTERNET

What Parents Can Do:

- Keep your computer in a family area to better monitor your child's activities.
- Regularly spend time on-line with your child to learn about his or her activities.
- Use filtering software to control access to the Internet and to applications on your computer. Set filters to prohibit computer users from visiting certain sites on the Internet unless a password is entered. Check out <http://www.getnetwise.org> for more information.
- Teach your child how to promptly log-off if he or she feels uncomfortable or scared by an online experience. Establish an atmosphere of trust with your child by not blaming him or her for uncomfortable online experiences.
- Discuss the difference between advertising, educational or entertaining content.
- Report sites that do not comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

EMAIL

Sending and receiving messages by electronic mail can help your child keep in touch with teachers, family and friends. Your child can make world-wide pen pals, get help with homework and practice writing. However, strangers, pretending to be someone else, can also communicate with your child. Your child may receive unsolicited email ("spam") about web sites with explicit material, products for sale, or moneymaking schemes. **What Parents Can Do:**

- Teach your child to **NEVER** share personal information about themselves or other family members with anyone on the computer.
- Know your child's password or share an e-mail account and look at what he or she is doing on line.
- Talk to your child about the people he or she contacts online.
- Insist that your child never arranges an in-person meeting without you present.
- Complain to your Internet Service Provider about unwanted email. Adjust the settings on the junk mail filter on your computer to filter out unwanted mail.
- Instruct your child to never respond to offensive or obtrusive messages and assure your child that he or she is not to blame for getting these kinds of messages.

CHAT ROOMS

Chatting online means reading messages from others as they are typing them, usually in theme-specific chat rooms. Your child can communicate instantly with family, friends and teachers. Be aware of the risks your child may be exposed to in chat rooms including offensive language and adult conversation. Because of the interactive nature of chatting, it is the online activity through which children are most likely to encounter someone who may want to harm them.

What Parents Can Do:

- Teach your child **NEVER** to give out personal information such as his or her name, address, phone number, school name, or anything else that is personally identifying.
- Explain that people are not always who they say they are.
- Limit your child to specific chat rooms or consider blocking out chat rooms entirely.
- Set a rule that your child never arranges an in-person meeting without you present.

CHILDREN'S ONLINE PRIVACY PROTECTION ACT

The Federal Trade Commission has rules for website operators to protect children's privacy as required by the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. Here's a summary from the FTC: **Website Operators Must:**

Post their privacy policy. Websites directed to children or that knowingly collect information from kids under 13 must post a notice of their information collection practices that includes:

- types of personal information they collect from children, for example, name, home address, email address or hobbies.
- how the site will use the information, for example, to market to a child who supplies the information, to notify contest winners or to make the information available through a child's participation in a chat room.
- whether personal information is forwarded to advertisers or other third parties.
- a contact at the site.

Get parental consent. In many cases, sites must obtain parental consent before collecting, using or disclosing personal information about children. Consent is not required when a site collects an email address to:

- respond to a one-time request from the child.
- provide notice to the parent.
- ensure the safety of the child or the site.
- send a newsletter or other information on a regular basis as long as the site notifies a parent and gives them a chance to say no to the arrangement.

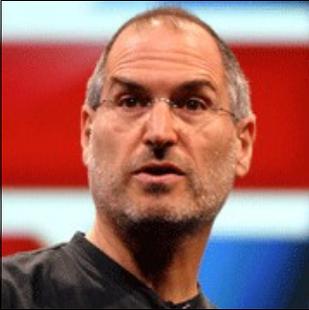
Parents Should:



Look for the privacy policy on any website directed to children. The policy must be available through a link on the website's homepage and at each area where personal information is collected from children. Websites for general audiences that have a children's section must post the notice on the homepages of the section for children. Read the policy closely to learn the kinds of personal information being collected, how it will be used, and whether it will be passed on to third parties. If a website doesn't post basic protections for children's personal information, ask for details of their information collection practices. Report websites that refuse to give you information to the FTC at [.ftc.](http://ftc.gov) or toll-free by calling (877) FTC-HELP.

This information is available on the Delaware Department of Justice website at:
<http://attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/consumers/protection/brochure/yourchild.pdf>

Spotlight on Celebrities Formerly Foster: Steve Jobs



Steve Jobs is co-founder and CEO of Apple Computer, industry leader with the award winning Macintosh computers as well as the popular iPod and iTunes, and iPhone. He is also co-founder and CEO of Pixar Studios, winning over 20 Academy Awards for its animated films including: Toy Story, A Bugs Life, Monsters, Inc., Finding Nemo, Cars, and Ratatouille.

“I was born in San Francisco, California, USA, planet Earth, February 24, 1955” Jobs told the Smithsonian in an interview. His birth mother was single and in the 50’s, young women who gave birth “out of wedlock” were shamed into giving their babies up for adoption. Paul and Clara Jobs adopted Steve soon after his birth and raised him in California’s “silicon valley”.

Steve Jobs grew up a free spirit with a love of mischief. He challenged and defied his teachers, caused trouble and was suspended many times and finally expelled. He was also very smart, skipped a couple of grades and developed an intense curiosity about electronics.

Teamed up with his high school friend the electronic genius Steve Wozniak, Jobs began selling the computers they assembled in his garage, eventually revolutionizing the computer industry and making Jobs a multimillionaire before he was 30.

Factoids:

- Steve tracked down his younger biological sister. The author Mona Simpson, and now counts her as one of his best friends.
- On his biological father’s side, Steve is reportedly of Egyptian Arab descent
- Steve usually wears jeans with a black turtleneck and running shoes
- Jobs is usually a vegetarian - although he reportedly eats fish from time to time.

Article courtesy of: www.fosterclub.com

Match It!

1. UTAH	_____	A. PHOENIX
2. WASHINGTON	_____	B. TALLAHASSEE
3. VERMONT	_____	C. SPRINGFIELD
4. PENNSYLVANIA	_____	D. ANNAPOLIS
5. MICHIGAN	_____	E. LANSING
6. TEXAS	_____	F. HELENA
7. ARIZONA	_____	G. CONCORD
8. WEST VIRGINIA	_____	H. AUSTIN
9. TENNESSEE	_____	I. MONTPEILIER
10. NEW HAMPSHIRE	_____	J. SALT LAKE CITY
11. ILLINOIS	_____	K. CHARLESTON
12. MARYLAND	_____	L. CHEYENNE
13. DELAWARE	_____	M. DOVER
14. FLORIDA	_____	N. HARRISBURG
15. MASSACHUSETTS	_____	O. NASHVILLE
16. WYOMING	_____	P. BOSTON

**Division of Services for Children, Youth,
and Their Families**

1825 Faulkland Road
Wilmington, DE 19805



Remember to sign up for trainings this Fall!

We are offering several new courses and DVD-based classes.

Refer to your training newsletter or contact your coordinator for more information!