

# Resource Parents Newsletter

*“Love, security and acceptance should be at the heart of family life.”*

## What Every Child Needs for Good Mental Health

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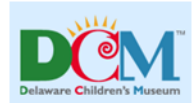
It is easy for parents to identify their child’s physical needs: nutritious food, warm clothes when it’s cold, bedtime at a reasonable hour. However, a child’s mental and emotional needs may not be as obvious. Good mental health allows children to think clearly, develop socially and learn new skills. Additionally, good friends and encouraging words from adults are all important for helping children develop self confidence, high self-esteem, and a healthy emotional outlook on life.

Love, security and acceptance should be at the heart of family life. Children need to know that your love does not depend on his or her accomplishments. Mistakes and/or defeats should be expected and accepted. Confidence grows in a home that is full of unconditional love and affection.

In order to nurture children’s confidence and self-esteem, praise them

and give encouragement. Set realistic goals that match your child’s ambitions and abilities. Be honest. It is important for children to know that we make mistakes, so do not hide your failures from them. Avoid sarcastic remarks that may bring a child down; instead provide assurance. Encourage a child to strive to do his or her best and to enjoy the process of trying new activities and building skills. (Continued on pg. 3)

### Did you know?



At the **Delaware Children’s Museum**, the entrance fee on the third Wednesday of each month is only \$2 per person! Visit between 5-7pm.

They also have 4 admission passes at the Wilmington Library (on 10th St. as well as on Market St.) that can be checked out with a library card.

<http://www.delawarechildrensmuseum.org/>

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## Educational Surrogate Parent (ESP) Training

The Educational Surrogate Parent Program along with Children & Families First will be holding an **Educational Surrogate Parent Training** on Wednesday, July 11, from 6-8pm at the CFF Dover office. This training is for foster parents who are (or may be) caring for children with disabilities who have special education needs. An ESP parent attends school meetings and works with a school team to develop and monitor a child’s

Individualized Education Program (IEP). This training will include information about the appointment process, role and responsibilities of an ESP, and information about the special education process. A certificate will be provided after participation in the training. The training is open to CFF and non-CFF foster parents.

Contact Cherie Crockett at 302-777-9724 or [cherie.crockett@cffde.org](mailto:cherie.crockett@cffde.org) to RSVP

# How Not to Raise a Bully: The Early Roots of Empathy

By Maia Szalavitz, TIME Magazine

Increasingly, neuroscientists, psychologists and educators believe that bullying and other kinds of violence can indeed be reduced by encouraging empathy at an early age. Over the past decade, research in empathy — the ability to put ourselves in another person's shoes — has suggested that it is key, if not *the* key, to all human social interaction and morality.

Without empathy, we would have no cohesive society, no trust and no reason not to murder, cheat, steal or lie. The capacity for empathy is believed to be innate in most humans.

The first stirrings of human empathy typically appear in babyhood: newborns cry when hearing another infant's cry, and studies have shown that children as young as 14 months offer unsolicited help to adults who appear to be struggling to reach something. Babies have also shown a distinct preference for adults who help rather

than hinder others.

But like language, the development of this inherent tendency may be affected by early experience Childhood — as early as infancy — is now known to be a critical time for the development of empathy. And although children can be astonishingly resilient, surviving and sometimes thriving despite abuse and neglect, studies show that those who experience such early trauma are at much greater risk of becoming aggressive ... later on, bullying other children or being victimized by bullies themselves.

Start by teaching children to understand their own behavior and feelings — it provides the basic tools for understanding the behavior and feelings of others. research shows that simple exposure to other kinds of people in a friendly setting can increase your empathy toward them.

► **Children & Families First is looking forward to spending the day with you at this terrific event!**

*2012 Foster Parent  
Conference and Recognition Banquet*



*Life Changers:  
Impacting Today For A Better  
Tomorrow*

We hope that you will come to this annual event and enjoy your day by :

- Gathering for a free continental breakfast
- Attending morning and afternoon training sessions
- Enjoying a free buffet luncheon
- Enjoying our recognition ceremony for Delaware's foster parents
- Enjoying a day with other foster parents and youth service staff—get to know our staff!

*Spend the day with us and receive 6 hours of training credits!*

To RSVP, please contact Prevent Child Abuse Delaware at 302-425-7490

**Date of the Recognition Conference:** May 31, 2012

**Time of the Recognition Conference:** 8am to 4pm

**Location of the Recognition Conference:** Sheraton Hotel  
1570 North DuPont Highway  
Dover, Delaware 19901

## Congratulations to:

**Melissa** for being nominated to have her wish granted at the Foster Youth Recognition Event on May 2nd.

**Ahmad** for being on "green" for the entire month of April for good behavior at school!

**We are happy to  
announce our newest  
resource parents,  
Greg & Ellen of NCC!  
Welcome to the CFF  
family!  
Congratulations to  
Teresa & Harold of  
NCC on the adoption of  
their daughter  
Kayleigh!**

## What Every Child Needs for Good Mental Health (Cont.)

Encourage children to play. While playtime is just “fun” to children, it is actually important to their development. It helps them be creative, learn problem-solving skills, and learn self-control. Both peers and parents can be good playmates for children. It is important for children to participate in activities and to enjoy themselves without concern of winning or losing.

Children need the opportunity to explore and develop new skills and independence. At the same time, children need to learn that certain behaviors are unacceptable and that they are responsible for the consequences of their actions. As members of a family, children need to learn the rules of the family unit. Offer guidance, and discipline, that is fair and consistent. They will take these social skills and rules of conduct to school and eventually to the

workplace. Be firm, but kind and realistic with your expectations, and set a good example. Criticize behaviors, not your child. For example, it is best to say, “That was a bad thing you did,” rather than “You are a bad boy or girl.” Avoid nagging, threats, and bribery, and talk about feelings when one is upset or has had a temper tantrum. Remember, the goal is not to control the child, but for him or her to learn self-control.

Nervous mannerisms, shyness, withdrawal and aggressive behavior may be signs of childhood fears. A change in normal eating and sleeping patterns may also signal an unhealthy fear. Children who “play sick” or feel anxious regularly may have some problems that need attention. Fear of school can occur following a stressful event such as moving to a new neighborhood, changing schools, or after a bad incident at

school.

Parents and family members are usually the first to notice if a child has problems with emotions or behavior. Your observations with those of teachers and other caregivers may lead you to seek help for your child. If you suspect a problem or have questions, consult your pediatrician or contact a mental health professional.



## May Resource and Training Opportunities

See calendar on reverse page for date, time, and registration information for each listing.

### Meaningful IEPs: A Step-by-Step Approach

This session introduces participants to the Delaware Individualized Education Program (IEP) document and provides a detailed overview of the different IEP components. By becoming more familiar with the content of the IEP, parents gain a thorough understanding on how to contribute to the development of a meaningful and appropriate IEP that meets their children's unique educational and functional needs.

### Positive Behavior Supports: To Help with Tantrums and Meltdowns

Can't stand another behavior crisis? Come and learn about the basics of positive discipline, understand children's individual temperaments and learn to apply proven techniques designed to turn inappropriate behaviors into ones that are positive and appropriate.

**Beat Back Bullying** Every day in our communities and schools many children are threatened, teased and bullied. Do you know the warning signs of bullying? In this seminar, parents will learn to identify signs of bullying and will receive tips for prevention and learn how to support your child if bullying has occurred.

### Teenage Mental Health & Substance Abuse Prevention: Mini Conference

Keynote speaker is Dr. Julius Mullen of Children & Families First. Youth, parents, educators serving youth and youth organizations within the Kent and Sussex Counties of Delaware are cordially invited to attend. Primary prevention is the key to keeping our youth safe! Breakfast is included. Contact Dr. Gwendolyn Scott-Jones at 302-857-6664 or [gscottjones@desu.edu](mailto:gscottjones@desu.edu) for additional information.

**Fostering Independence: Finance and Money Management** This is session seven in a ten part series hosted

by Children & Families First to prepare youth who will be aging out of the foster care system. There will be dinner before the program and raffles for both teens and adults. Resource parents will earn training hours. Contact Kathy Snyder for more information and to register: 604-6299.

**Parents of Older & Challenging Children Support Group**—Contact Mary Jo Wolfe at 302-571-8784

**Adoptive Families of Color with Information & Support Group**—Contact May Lou Edgar at 302-764-1890



## FYI:

**Customer Service Surveys** CFF Supervisors will begin contacting resource homes either by meeting in the home, speaking in person, or contacting by phone, in order to make sure that resource families are satisfied with services.