

Resource Family Connections

March/April 2020 Newsletter

If you are interested in submitting an article for upcoming newsletters, or have suggestions on improving the newsletter, please contact Stephanie Soza (661) 873-2303 or email sozas@kerndhs.com or Melissa Soin at: (661) 873-2382 or email soinm@kerndhs.com.

Ombudsman Corner

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It was first observed in 1983 when President Ronald Reagan made the proclamation. During this month and throughout the year, communities all over the nation acknowledge the importance of working with families to prevent child abuse and neglect and to promote the well-being of children and families. Increasing awareness, providing education and supporting families with resources and strategies is the focus of this awareness campaign.



Child abuse and neglect is a community problem and we all know or have heard of someone who has experienced it. Each of us can join the fight to end child abuse by making a commitment to be a part of the solution. Below are a few simple steps that can make a big impact:

- Educate yourself and others on recognizing the signs of child abuse and neglect
- Report concerns to Kern County Department of Human Services Hotline at (661) 631-6011 countywide and (760) 375-6049 in Ridgecrest.
- Help a family under stress.
- Volunteer your time to a local organization.

Never underestimate the value and important difference you make in every life you touch. For the impact you make today has a powerful rippling effect on every tomorrow.

Annual Training

Once a resource family is approved, they are responsible for maintaining eight (8) hours of training each year to keep their approval up to date. Families are encouraged to earn the required eight (8) hours of training within an adequate amount of time as to not delay the annual update of the resource family. To acquire a list of annual training classes, dates and times, please visit the Bakersfield College website at <https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/FKCE/schedules#ot> and select the "on-going training" link. Please note that childcare is NOT provided for in-service training classes. If you have any questions regarding annual training, please contact your assigned Resource Family Approval Social Worker. A big thank you goes out to Bakersfield College Foster and Kinship Care Education Program for their continual partnership in providing quality education to all our resource families.

Melissa's Message

QPI Focused

Kern County takes pride in being a Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) county and we work in collaboration with our resource families to provide the best possible care to our foster youth. One such collaborative effort is to support parenting partnerships in encouraging participation of both resource families and birth parents in meetings related to the youth, such as medical and dental appointments and Individualized Education Program meetings. By actively participating in these meetings, the child's team (birth parent, resource parent, social worker, health and education professionals and the child), can make the best possible decisions for the youth in regards to their education, safety and well-being. For more information about QPI, visit <http://www.qpicalifornia.org/index.html>.



Kudos Korner

Patience above All

A well-deserved and heartfelt thank you goes out to a resource family that demonstrated dedication and patience in a very delicate situation concerning two young brothers. With one of the brothers in hospital care in the Los Angeles area, this resource family was asked to bring in the other brother for urgent testing. The resource family willingly complied and quickly scheduled the appointment. On the appointment day, the resource family brought in the child and even kept the social worker's supervisor up to date on the status of the appointment. With the appointment well past its scheduled time, the resource family did not leave the hospital until the tests were completed; that meant staying at the hospital until the early morning hours. This resource family understood the importance of the tests to ensure the safety and well-being of both brothers and made the decision to stay for as long as it took. The Kern County Department of Human Services is grateful to have this resource family as a partner in caring for Kern County foster youth.



East Kern Support & Training

The Kern County Department of Human Services (KCDHS) hosts quarterly East Kern Support and Training events for our resource families who live out in areas such as Ridgecrest, Mojave, California City, Rosamond, Tehachapi and many others in East Kern. These events offer a supportive network for our families to collaborate with one another and receive some essential training.

KCDHS understands the importance of reaching out to these outlying areas because resources are limited; nevertheless, the safety and well-being of the foster youth placed with East Kern resource families remains of the utmost importance. East Kern Support and Training events are typically held at either the Cerro Coso Community College in Ridgecrest or the Mojave Department of Human Services office. Our next event is scheduled for March 12, 2020. Save the date and invitation fliers are mailed to all approved East Kern families. For more information about East Kern Support and Training events, please contact Resource Family Specialist Melissa Soin at (661) 873-2382.

*Congratulations Kern County's Newest
Forever Families!*



National Adoption Day Recap

During the month of November, Kern County Department of Human Services (KCDHS) celebrates the wonderful gift of adoption for our foster youth who find their forever home. National Adoption Day was held on November 22, 2019 at the Kern County Juvenile Courthouse. This day celebrated youth and their adopted families with carnival games, food, crafts and entertainment. KCDHS Adoptions unit as well as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteers and Foster Family Agencies such as Child Net, Koinonia and Kern Bridges volunteered to set up, run the booths and assist families throughout the day.

Volunteers from Adoptions and Resource Family Approval dressed as Disney Princesses and Princes to take photos and interact with the children. Home Depot was also there to offer craft tables for the children. Each adopted child received a special bag with a book, blanket and teddy bear. All four courtrooms at the Juvenile Courthouse were busy with processing adoptions and fifty-eight adoptions were finalized that day; either at the Juvenile Courthouse or through private adoptions at the Family Law Division in downtown Bakersfield. KCDHS would like to thank all our volunteers, collaborating agencies, and families for making National Adoption Day 2019 an event to remember!



Unusual Incident Reporting

Unusual Incident Report forms are a required form given to all resource parents when a foster youth is placed in the home. This form provides the caregiver with a method of documenting any incidents that the foster youth was involved in that caused any sort of injury to the child and/or were out of the ordinary. The report needs to be provided to the RFA social worker and to the placement social worker by telephone, e-mail, or fax within 24 hours or by the next business day following the event. Please refer to the Written Directives 11-06(b) for specific information that is required to be reported. Some examples of when to fill out an unusual incident report are:

- The child scrapes his/her knees from falling while playing
- The child is scratched, bit, pinched or kicked by another child
- The child is bruised on the shins from being kicked while playing
- When a child runs away
- Truancy

To obtain an Unusual Incident Report form, please contact the child's primary social worker or your assigned resource family approval social worker.

California Alliance for Caregivers

The California Alliance for Caregivers (CAC) is an advocate group that represents the voices of relative and non-relative caregivers that helps promote the well-being of foster youth. Valuable input is gathered through CAC ambassadors, policy summits, parent surveys, training, and outreach groups. This input is then shared by inviting caregivers to have a 'Day at the Capitol', through California Department of Social Services workgroups, hosting monthly roundtable collaboratives and quarterly meeting with advocates and agencies. CAC also provides important programs and services such as the CAC Ambassadors Coalition of Support Group Leaders and Parents & Caregivers for Wellness, which provides engagement and advocacy for foster youth mental health services. Membership for CAC is free and there are no obligations. To become a member or to learn more about the California Alliance for Caregivers, please visit <https://www.cacaregivers.org/>.

Save the Date

Join us for our annual Resource Parent Appreciation Dinner

This year's annual Resource Parent Appreciation Dinner will be held on Monday May 11, 2020. The month of May is Resource Family Awareness month and this dinner is a way of showing our appreciation to all our resource parents in caring for Kern County foster youth. This event also provides valuable training where our resource parents will receive a certificate for **two hours** of training. Please be advised that due to limited seating, this dinner is an **adult only** event. All resource families will receive an invitation by mail with the location and time of event as well as how to RSVP.



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