

CBTS NEWSLETTER

 December 2009 

Proctor Parents & Birth Parents: Working Together During the Holidays

"Holidays and other special events allow proctor parents the wonderful opportunity of creating lasting memories and continuing family traditions. However, holidays can stir up mixed feelings and conflicting emotions for children in foster care. The following are suggestions on how proctor parents can effectively and positively interact with birth parents during the holidays.

- Develop positive relationships with the birth family. Communication, consideration, and respect are essential components in promoting and enhancing positive working relationships with birth families. Talk to the youth placed in your home and their birth parents about your family traditions and beliefs and theirs to help develop mutual understanding, encourage respect for one another, and further build relationships.
- Encourage youth to make cards and additional phone calls to their birth parents during the holidays and other special occasions that occur throughout the year. If you participate in gift exchange, never try to out-perform the birth parents. Remember that sentimental gifts, whether given or received, can be more valuable than any item that was purchased at a store.
- Give birth families the opportunity of celebrating the holidays with their children first before their children celebrate with the proctor family.
- Provide the youth with a disposable camera when they visit their family, especially during the holidays. When they return, you can develop the pictures and they can share special photo memories about times with their birth family."

CBTS

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FOSTER YOUTH AND THE HOLIDAYS

"We expect holidays filled with joy and fun. Our wish is to share Christmas the way it should be with our foster youth. All we want is to feel good about being able to include youth who need the holiday spirit more than anyone. So, what is wrong? Why do they look like you've asked them to swallow poison rather than share the sumptuous feast? Why do they pull away as you try to bring them closer into your family fold?"

The reasons are simple. Number one is guilt they feel. No doubt, your family celebrates the holidays in ways that are unfamiliar from the way their family did. They may have an actual reason to think badly of their own celebrations as they may have been filled with bad memories.

Some may feel a division in their feelings that they cannot manage. They know they should share the holiday with their natural parents, but may also wish to be with you. They feel like they are disloyal to their own parents and this causes a problem for them. When a child feels divided, he cannot be happy. Give them the option to do either or both.

This may also be an uncomfortable time for foster youth since families get more emotional and tend to reveal their warm feelings about each other at this time. The closeness you share with your own children and family members points out the lack of good relationships in their natural family.

A great deal of the celebration may focus on religion and your own beliefs. This may be unsettling to foster youth. They may not have come far enough to believe as you do and might feel forced to share these ideas. Leave this area open. Share your views, but never force them upon foster youth.

If you show by example, your ideas, your religious beliefs will be more evident than when you sit down with the intention of convincing them.

Always keep in mind where your foster youth came from, the types of families they grew up in and the homes they lived in. Put yourself in their place and try to understand that your entire world may be different from theirs. Include them, but understand if they pull away. Keep trying to let them be part of the celebration. In any way you can, make them feel that they are part of your family and meant to share the holidays.

It is especially hard for youth who cannot go home for the holidays or have nowhere to go home to. You need to help them feel they are part of your family most of all. Ignore their foul tempers and distant attitudes. They may be just really hurting inside and need you more than anything to think well of them.

Get them started as early as possible including them in every step of the preparations. Show them the excitement of the holidays, but be patient when their reactions are not what you expect. Inside, they may be in turmoil about what to do and how to act. Just use the love you always give and they will come around."



CBTS PROCTOR TRAINING

Wednesday, December 16, 2009

5:30 p.m.

220 East 3900 South

Topic/Presenter: To be announced

If you are not attending proctor training on a regular basis you are missing out on very valuable information. Our training in November covered several important topics. CBTS sincerely appreciates Wanda, Tanya, Dale, Susan and Julie for sharing their experience and valuable ideas/suggestions with all of us.



DCFS PRACTICE MODEL TRAINING

January 7, 2010	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
January 14, 2010	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
January 21, 2010	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Training located at Oquirrh Training Center, 2665 South Lake Erie Drive (3800 West). Call 801-756-7098 to register.

This is a mandatory training all proctor parents must take, preferably during the first year.

CPR/FIRST AID CERTIFICATION

Murray High School
(147 East 5440 South in the Choir Room)

Wednesday, December 9 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Salt Lake City Main Library
(210 East 400 South - Room A or C)

Thursday, December 3 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 16 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

For more information call
Save-A-Heart
582-7114

The first 1.5 hours is CPR training and the second 1.5 hours is First Aid.

Remember to let them know you are with CBTS if you attend.



THRIFT ON 33rd

This is a good place to check out for inexpensive Christmas decorations, clothing and gifts. They are located at 2090 East 3300 South. Their hours are 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Thursday they are open until 7:00 p.m. They will be open until December 23.



If the plan is for reunification, part of your job is to help the child and parent maintain an attachment with each other. You should not expect the youth in your care to deny the attachment they have to their biological family. They cannot 'shut off' the attachment while they are with you and turn it back on when they return to their family. Children in foster care need contact with their family in order to nurture the attachment.

Helping the parent and child maintain a connection:

- Shows the biological family you are committed to helping the family reunite
- Helps the biological family to feel supported and less threatened by the child's relationship with you
- Helps children know you support their relationship with their parents
- Helps children know they do not have to choose between you and their parents

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH BIRTH FAMILIES

The following is a list of suggestions for developing a relationship with biological families:

- Act as a role model for the family - treat them as you would want to be treated if the situation was reversed.
- Nurture the family members - the parents need to be nurtured in order to be able to nurture.
- Let them be the knowledgeable one when talking about their child.
- Understand their anger/frustration as an expression of grief. Do not show your own anger. Instead, show compassion.
- Don't sell yourself as wonderful, superior, or the child's salvation.
- They need to hear again and again that their child needs them and that material things are not important.
- They need to hear you are here to help their family reunite.
- Support the parents as they learn how to parent their child in a healthy way.
- Invite them to go clothes shopping with you and their child.
- Work with them on making a scrapbook of photos and memories.
- Assist them with transportation to meetings.
- Give parents options - state what you are willing to do, then give the parents the opportunity to say what they are willing to do.
- Invite the parents to school conferences, IEP meetings, etc.
- Share the child's awards, report cards, school work.
- Help the youth remember Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays and special holidays.
- Take photos of the parent with their child and give them a copy.
- Provide a relaxed friendly atmosphere for visits to your home.
- Provide parents with a list of community resources.
- Be honest with the parent.
- Do not overreact to criticism.
- Follow the agency guidelines on telephone communication between the parent and child.
- Treat the parent as part of the team working with the child.
- Assist parent to identify and build his/her own support networks.
- Honor the racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic diversity of the family.
- Work with the parent to prepare their child for the transition home.
- Attend court hearings together.
- Maintain a journal of the youth's activities, progress, and accomplishments to accompany the youth upon reunification.
- LISTEN!! They need to be heard, not judged.

DECEMBER COMMUNITY EVENTS

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| December 1 - 31 | Trees of Diversity Exhibit
Open all day
Over 50 trees and holiday scenes representing various ethnic groups | WVC Cultural Celebration Center
Free | 1355 West 3100 South |
| December 1 - 20 | Gingerbread Village | Grand America Hotel | 555 South Main
Open all day
Free |
| December 1 | Santa Arrives
Crafts, activities, wagon rides, hot chocolate & more | Riverton Civic Center | 12830 S. Redwood Road
6:30 p.m.
Free |
| December 3 | Free Flu Clinic
First come first served while supplies last | West Valley City Hall | 3600 So. Constitution Blvd.
3:00 - 6:00 p.m. |
| December 4 | Game Night with Santa
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Games, surprises, refreshments and more geared for children ages 2-10 | Kearns Recreation Center | 5624 South 4800 West
\$1.00/person |
| December 5 | Annual Boutique Fiesta
Free Entry | Wheeler Farm | 6351 So. 900 E.
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. |
| December 5 | Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
Santa and Treats | 5025 South State | 6:00 p.m.
Free |
| December 5 - 6
p.m. Free | Red Butte Garden Holiday Open House
Handmade art and gifts - wreath making class (call 801-581-8454 to register) | 300 Wakara Way | 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 |
| December 8 | Calvary Baptist Choir
Free | WVC Cultural Celebration Center | 1355 W. 3100 So.
7:30 p.m. |
| December 13 | Messiah Sing In with the Murray Symphony
7:00 p.m. Free | Murray High School | 5440 South State |
| December 19 | Family Day at Utah Museum of Fine Arts | 410 Campus Center Dr. | Free |
| December 20 | Messiah Sing Along | Copper Hills Stake Center | 5176 W. Parr Drive (8540 So.) |



Ho-Ho-Ho

Merry Christmas!

WAYS TO CONFUSE SANTA

Leave him a note, explaining that you've gone away for the holidays. Ask if he would mind watering the plants.

Leave a note by the telephone, telling Santa that Mrs. Claus called and wanted to remind him to pick up some milk and a loaf of bread on his way home.

Throw a surprise party for Santa when he comes down the chimney. Refuse to let him leave until the strippers arrive.

Leave Santa a note, explaining that you've moved. Include a map with unclear and hard-to-read directions to your new house.

Take everything out of your house as if it's just been robbed. When Santa arrives, show up dressed like a policeman and say, "Well, well. They always return to the scene of the crime."

Leave out a copy of your Christmas list with last-minute changes and corrections.

Set a bear trap at the bottom of the chimney. Wait for Santa to get caught in it, and then explain that you're sorry, but from a distance, he looked like a bear.

Paint "hoofprints" all over your face and clothes. While he's in the house, go out on the roof. When he comes back up, act like you've been 'trampled.' Threaten to sue.

Dress up like the Easter Bunny. Wait for Santa to come and then say, "This neighborhood ain't big enough for the both of us."



You've Got Problems If...

You claim you were a Christmas tree in your former life.

You wear a Santa suit all the time and deny you're wearing it.

You paint your nose red, wear antlers and constantly complain about how you never get to join in on reindeer games.

You go to the mall, sit on Santa's lap and refuse to get off.

Your only holiday decoration is a rotting pumpkin.

Your best Christmas tradition involves a fire and reindeer meat.

You buy all of your Christmas gifts at a store that also sells gas.

Your idea of Christmas dinner is a six pack of beer and a cheese log.