



**PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION**

**HUI HO'OMALUKU
STATEWIDE
RESOURCE
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

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Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families



Volume 6, Issue 1

October 2012

MANDATORY ONGOING TRNG. REQUIREMENT FOR PIP2 – ITEM 8.4.2



THIS IS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE RAC ARTICLE IN THE JULY 2012 ISSUE WHICH PROVIDED INFORMATION ON A FEDERAL MANDATE: Due to a Federal Mandate, all states must establish a requirement of ongoing training hours for the continued licensure of Resource Families. The Training Requirements were to be established by September 30, 2012.

DHS-CWS provided information and gathered input through the collaborative effort of the PIP2 Workgroup, CWS Staff, Resource Family Advisory Committees (ITAO, RAC), RAC Newsletters, and CWS Annual Surveys with Resource Families and Statewide Trainings with Resource Caregivers. We tried to look for what would provide safe and good care for the children and their birth families involved with foster care, support for the resource families, etc. while understanding how much the resource families give of their time and dedication everyday. The input obtained brought forth a minimum requirement that is comparable to other states as well as many creative ideas to provide for flexibility in ways of learning. We appreciate Resource Families a great deal!

This is the Mandatory Ongoing Training Requirement for Resource Families. We will be providing more specific information during the next few months as to how it will be implemented.

Effective January 1, 2013, the Department of Human Services will initiate a Mandatory Ongoing Training Requirement for all licensed resource families. After the initial licensing year (H.A.N.A.I. curriculum for licensure), a minimum of six (6) training hours per family will be required annually or 12 hours over a two year-certification/licensing period.

DEFINITION OF TRAINING: Training means planned and organized activity designed to impart skills, techniques and methodologies to a resource caregiver or a group to assist: 1) in maintaining the safety, stability and well-being of children in foster care who reside in their home; 2) and in embracing and supporting the birth family towards reunification or placement with relatives and maintaining connections with family and culture; 3) and to provide support to the resource family. Training must be relevant to the foster care process; meeting the emotional, cultural, developmental, physical, educational, special needs of the child/youth in their care; supporting, mentoring, engaging the birth family; working as a team; impact that fostering has on the resource family; etc. Guidance is provided by DHS-CWS Licensing Units. Training Requirements are to be in compliance with Federal and State Laws, Hawai'i Administrative Rules, and/or Department of Human Services-Child Welfare Services Procedures.



ANNUAL PERIOD: Annual = per licensure year (vs. calendar year);

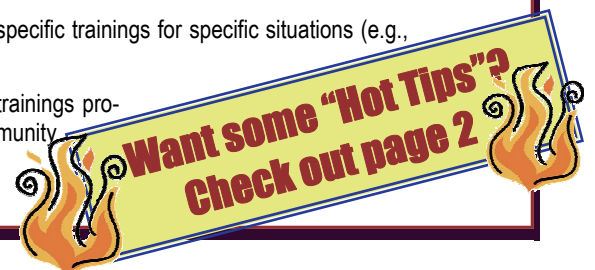
SECONDARY RESOURCE CAREGIVER: Recommended that if there is a secondary licensed resource caregiver, that resource caregiver also completes some of the required training hours.

RECOMMENDED TRAININGS: Also, highly recommended are CPR and First Aid Trainings.

ALTERNATIVE TRAININGS: Alternative training methods, as approved by DHS licensing, will be allowed in addition to in-person participation at conferences, etc. (e.g., a chart is being developed as a guide, with other discretion by licensing).

SPECIFIC MANDATES: DHS Licensing can also mandate specific trainings for specific situations (e.g., needs of child in placement --age, special needs, etc.).

COSTS: Resource Families are to participate in the FREE trainings provided by DHS contracted-providers or other contractors/community resources, other approved alternative training methods, OR at their own cost.



HUI HO'OMALU STATEWIDE RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

[www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/
social_services/child_welfare/
foster](http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster)

www.pidfoundation.org

Partners in Development
Foundation
2040 Bachelot St.
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-2433

If you would like to receive this newsletter, please call:
441-1125 (O'ahu),
888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or
E-mail:
RAC@pidfoundation.org

GO GREEN!

Want to help our environment? Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



Hot Tips for Resource Caregivers

By FPH-ITAO Advisory Committee

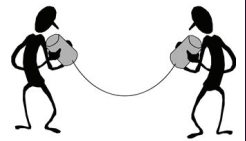
For me, having children is "What it's all about"! I love babies, little kids and even teenagers. I think it's a safe bet to say you and I have that in common, for you stepped up to help children and youth in the most generous way possible when you opened your home and heart to children and their families affected by foster care. Thank you!

I have five birth sons so, when I became a resource caregiver for a teenage boy, I thought I knew all there was to know about parenting. Boy, was I in for an awakening! There was much to learn about providing care to a child who had experienced trauma and loss as well as working with all the players on his team. That team included birth family, social workers, guardian ad litem (GALs), therapists, teachers, independent living program (ILP) workers, mentors, etc. Below are some tips that have helped me along the way. Please use what speaks to you and, if you have some tips that we can share in future articles, please send them to rac@pidfoundation.org. Put "Hot Tips" in the subject line.

Communicating with Your Social Worker

It helps to remember that if you do not get timely return calls from your worker, it has more to do with his or her workload than an attempt to avoid you. Here are some tips to keep in mind when leaving an "Action Message" for your social worker:

- Clearly state your name and the child's name.
- Clearly and briefly give the reason for your call. Giving a reason gives the worker the opportunity to take care of it before she even calls you back. Or, she can ask someone else to follow up. Since the point of the call is to get action, it's not always necessary to speak directly to the social worker.
- Give your telephone number slowly and clearly, even if you know the worker has your number in the file. Restate your name. Here's how your message might sound: "This is Maile Resource Caregiver and I am calling about Suzy Foster Child. I have not received her medical record number and she has a doctor's appointment next Wednesday. Please contact me to let me know how I will get the number before Wednesday. You can reach me by phone today between 3:00 and 5:00 or tomorrow between 8:00 and 12:00. My telephone number is 123-4567. Or, e-mail me at maile@alohaforever.net. I look forward to hearing from you.
- It is sometimes easier to get in touch with the social worker by e-mail. DHS social workers addresses are the first initial of the first name, the last name@dhs.hawaii.gov. Put the reason for your e-mail in the subject line. Put the information in the body of the e-mail, including the date by which you need the information, if appropriate.



When possible, go to another person besides the social worker for help. For instance, you can call the social worker's assistant about clothing allowances, bus passes, etc. Or, if the child's behavior is difficult for you to manage, you can work directly with the child's therapist.

Therapy and Foster Children/Youth

Children and youth in foster care often need counseling or therapy to help them heal from past traumatic experiences and losses. What has really helped my 'ohana is therapists who have invited me to talk with the therapist alone for the first 10 minutes of my foster child's therapy appointment. The therapist then works alone with the child/youth for 30 minutes and ends the session with all of us in the room, talking story together. This way, the therapist has explained my foster children's behaviors to me so that I better understand them while giving me several new approaches, or "tools", to be used in the home. This has enabled me to provide better, more therapeutic care to my foster children and a much more peaceful environment in the home for everyone.

If your foster child is not in therapy and you believe therapy would benefit him or her, request a referral from your child's social worker. The social worker may refer the child or may ask you to find a therapist. When shopping for a therapist, it is very important to look for one who is skilled in helping children and youth with trauma, loss and relationship issues. As Dr. Bruce Perry states, "The most important property of humankind is the capacity to form and maintain relationships. These relationships are absolutely necessary for any of us to survive, learn, work, love, and procreate".

Meeting with the Team

Each child involved in foster care has a "Team" of caring individuals who work for the best interest of the child. This team can include the resource caregiver, the child's social worker, the resource families' licensing worker, GAL or court appointed special advocate (CASA), therapist and Judge. As the H.A.N.A.I. Training Guide states, "To be effective in meeting the needs of children and families involved in CWS, teamwork is essential. Each member has specific responsibilities." Resource caregivers can request meetings with other team members.



When meeting with other team members, it is important to handle your "emotional state" prior to meeting. Before a meeting, make notes to yourself of things you want to discuss. Be specific and use examples wherever you can. Bring the list with you.

(Continued on pg. 3)

From the Perspective of a Gay Youth in Care

Kintaro Yonekura, BSW



Kintaro Yonekura

I entered the foster care system in 1980 at the age of 4 and remained in care until I aged out in 1994. I experienced multiple placements with resource families, group homes, treatment facilities, and even had a brief stay in Detention Home. Along with multiple placements comes new schools; I attended about 20 different schools. Besides being diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder, PTSD, Depression and Reactive Attachment Disorder, I also knew I was “different” than the other boys I came into contact with. From as far back as I can remember, I always had a physical attraction to other males. I grew up watching television shows like *Leave it to Beaver*, *The Brady Bunch* and *I Love Lucy*. What I learned from these type of shows was that a “normal” intimate relationship is made up of a male and female and also influenced my understanding of what a family was supposed to look like and how people should behave. What I was feeling and thinking did not align with how the world was being shown to me.

During my adolescent and teenage years, I experimented with dressing up in women’s clothing. In my mind, if I was a female, then it would be okay for me to be interested in men. My resource caregiver and social worker thought differently. I was sent to see several different psychologists with the hopes that I would be “fixed.” Instead I rebelled and became even more angry and confused. It was not okay and not normal for me to be interested in men. Eventually, I turned to alcohol and drugs which led me to run away from placements. Part of the reason why I was abusing substances was because I was confused and conflicted with my sexual orientation and sexuality. I became sexually active at an early age and experimented with girls because I wanted to be “normal.” I also experimented with men and practiced risky behaviors, because I didn’t want anyone to know what I was doing. It wasn’t until I was 16 years old and in a long-term residential treatment center, that I came to terms with my sexual orientation. I had many individual and group therapy sessions to help me work through my confused identity and sexual orientation.

Since coming out at the age of 16, I have “come out” many times since then. Each time I am introduced into a new group (i.e., work, school, volunteering, friends), I have to go through the process of coming out again to these new people. This coming out process gets easier and easier, but it still is a process each time.

Did someone who identifies as a Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ) person make the choice to be LGBTQ? In most cases, no. The person did not make the choice to be LGBTQ. The life of an LGBTQ person can be difficult. For example, some people live a closeted life and are not able to openly be in a relationship with someone of the same sex. The discrimination and name calling that happens is frequent and extreme. And, often-times laws that are in place prohibit marriage of same sex couples.

What would have helped me come to terms with my sexual orientation earlier? If I could have had conversations with people about sexuality and my thoughts. In order to have this conversation, I would have had to feel safe with the people I was speaking with. How I would have determined which people were safe to talk to would have been determined by their actions and the choice of words they use. If I hear my resource caregivers, social worker, service providers, family or friends refer to LGBTQ people as “wrong, disgusting, immoral” or other derogatory words that are associated with being LGBTQ, then I would come to the conclusion that these people would not be safe for me to have a conversation with about sexuality.

Who is someone that I would identify today as a person who is supportive of me being gay? My social worker who sent me to the psychologist when I was an adolescent is one of the biggest advocates for the LGBTQ community. We both struggled with my sexual orientation and many other issues together, but he was the only consistent adult throughout my entire life, even up to today. My social worker did a lot of research and educated himself about LGBTQ lifestyle.

Why should resource caregivers, social workers, service providers, family and friends NOT reject LGBTQ youth?

- ◆ LGBTQ youth are more than 8 times as likely to have attempted suicide.
- ◆ LGBTQ youth are nearly 6 times as likely to report high levels of depression.
- ◆ LGBTQ youth are more than 3 times as likely to use illegal drugs.
- ◆ LGBTQ youth are more than 3 times as likely to be at high risk for HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.
- ◆ For more information please visit www.ItTakesAnOhana.org

Grief and Trauma in the Lives of Foster Children

by Cynthia White, M.Ed., Executive Director of Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i and the Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition

The Child Bereavement Study (1996) conducted at Harvard University by Drs. Phyllis Silverman and William Worden found the number one factor in the appearance of problems in children is the number of changes they experience after a loss. More changes mean more problems. Foster children tend to experience the greatest number of changes for any group of children impacted by loss of parents. It is difficult for children to comprehend the abstract reality of separation from parents. They understand that a person is gone; then a person is there. When a person is gone and then still gone and still gone, a child may grieve at each moment when he or she feels the person's gone-ness. At first, a child may not have a grief response until the ever-increasing affect of gone-ness inspires a longing or aching protest within the child. Children also mourn the loss of secondary people in their lives such as other family members and persons with whom the child spent large amounts of time.

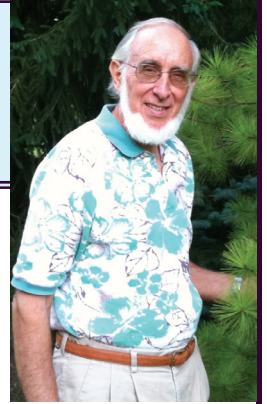
Separation from parents is a disruption in children's lives that can be frightening. Their lives may seem undependable, unstable, confusing and out of control. They tend to feel powerless and helpless. One thing that can ease these responses is to be empowered with choices. If children have choices, then they will have a renewed sense of control. Provide children with a variety of opportunities and activities from which to choose. Find every

(Continued on pg. 10)

A.F.T. (A Fostering Thought)

Good as Gold

By Dr. Paul Brennan



Dr. Paul Brennan

Throughout this past year we have been privileged to witness some outstanding examples of excellence, a subject vitally important, especially to children. Mediocrity, weakness, failure, and poor decision-making so often dominate the lives of youth, not only personally, but in the public media as well. So when we view public or private examples of accomplishment, we should pause to reflect on what we have seen.

Over these past months we here in Hawai'i have been able to tune in to at least two exceptional events, played out on the international stage. The earlier one, in April, taking part in Hilo, involved the "World Series" of hula competition. The participants, many of them youth, had been selected to compete in the Merrie Monarch Festival, that annual spring event which brings to the stage some of the finest expressions of Hawaiian culture. Even though we spectators may know little or nothing about the dancing, we cannot help but be impressed with the graceful movements, the precise choreography, the spectacular costuming, and the obvious pride of each participant in expressing their stories. Those stories may be ancient or modern, but their messages emerge in powerful, beautiful forms, which even the uninformed or non-local witnesses might be able to appreciate. It is excellence of the highest kind.



More recently, in late July and early August, we watched so fleetingly a different kind of excellence—the Olympic Games. Like the Merrie Monarch Festival, they exhibited for us observers—whether young or old, athletic or otherwise—what it means to set high goals, work hard and attain the highest achievements. We are told that 85 nations won at least one medal, that 29 of the US's 46 gold medals were won by women, that Hussein Bolt won three gold medals within the combined time of 40 seconds, and that Michael Phelps, with his 19 golds, set a standard for excellence that may never be able to be achieved by any participant. Wow! They made each event look so easy. But not every athlete went home a winner: alas, some of the badminton players were expelled for cheating. There were so many "teachable moments" in all that we were privileged to witness.

I reflect on my youth and still recall painfully the absence of excellent modeling from my father. Mostly he was absent—not helping to pay the bills, not providing nurturing, not showing us how to make a strong family. I could not have articulated as a child what an ideal family might be or do, but I knew it was not us. All of our strength, our "excellence" if you will, came from our mother and her mother and father. The character building that they instilled in us was known throughout our town. We were "Mardi's Kids", and that label opened doors, and got us jobs, and propelled us forward to achievements in school and beyond. The expectations were high for us, because our mother and grandparents had set "the bar" high.

The subject of excellence can be illustrated from so many of the foster children who came into our home. I select this one because it comes out of an experience of failure. One of our youth, in high school at a prestigious private institution, was expelled for stealing wallets from her "privileged" classmates. After the lengthy interrogation process with school officials, lasting late into the evening, we were driving home and our daughter broke the awkward silence by blurting out, "When are you going to kick me out?" She assumed, following the series of previous rejections just minutes before, that her poor choices would also culminate in our rejection. It was my privilege to announce calmly that we would not be "kicking her out." We wanted to help her to establish a different record by making good choices on the pathway to acceptance, not rejection, the pathway to achievement, not failure. Some ten years have now passed, she graduated from high school and then college, and now she is a responsible employee in a commercial enterprise. Excellence comes in many forms, in its own time and place, and only we might know when it has been achieved. Congratulations to every achiever, and to every home where excellence is practiced. That's even better than gold!

'Ohana Time—Catch the Wave

By Cindy Shimabukuro, LSW

Each May we celebrate National Foster Care Month. This is a time to recognize everyone involved in providing support to children in foster care and their birth families. This year in our annual conferences we were able to do just that. The conference itself was great in that we learned more about the enhanced focus of DHS on engaging birth families in all aspects of Child Welfare work. One very special way is to have resource caregivers work more closely with the birth families of the children in care. Research has shown that this can improve positive outcomes for the youth in care. While the emphasis is new, we found out that the practice of this for many families is not new. On each island/area we were introduced to resource caregivers, youth, DHS-CWS workers, providers and birth families who were already doing this very important work. These diverse panels of courageous birth families, foster youth, resource families and DHS-CWS workers provided the conference participants with living examples of what partnering can do and encourages all of us to catch the 'Ohana Time wave which is hitting the shores of all islands.

On O'ahu, we learned how supportive relationships between the birth family and the resource caregivers can lead to the youth feeling supported and cared for by all. The youth also shared how important this partnership was ---made her feel more comfortable, and lessened her ability to split her birth parent and the resource caregiver, which this mature young woman was not so fond of as a teen, but realizes the benefit of this united front in hindsight—and how she could be loved by two families. The social worker shared how this partnership was of benefit to everyone, including the worker. We also saw how one family's willingness to open their home to the birth family to feed the young child breakfast, decreased the child's fear of her new living situation.

(Continued on pg. 6)

'Ohana Time—Catch the Wave (cont.)

On **Kaua'i**, we saw how even when the caregivers are related to the birth family, it is important to recognize the need for maintaining connections. This doesn't always come easily and sometimes is even more of a challenge because of the existing relationship.

On **Maui**, we were provided a powerful testimony by a birth father who spoke to the importance of maintaining connections with his children. This was an incarcerated birth father who demonstrated courage and tenacity to regain custody and care of his children. The social worker and CWS staff teamed with the father and supported his efforts --it resulted in a successful reunification!

In **East Hawai'i**, we were provided with an opportunity to see how this work can differ when there is a related caregiver and one who is not related. We were able to see and hear how in spite of the challenges, how important it is for all parties to maintain connections for the sake of the child. We saw how one CWS social worker infuses these connections in all that he does and how this leads to better outcomes for the youth. This social worker and his assistant partner to give 1000% to his birth and resource families and the children/youth---to reunify, place with relatives, to maintain connections---through empowerment, respect, and tons of aloha!

In **West Hawai'i**, we were provided with a glimpse of one resource caregiver who learned early on how 'Ohana Time and enhancing birth family connections can make his job as a resource caregiver much easier. This resource caregiver has birth family over to his home to assist with homework and participate in holiday dinners. When in person time is not feasible, they do virtual bed time stories and tuck ins for the youngsters over the phone. We also learned from the birth parent and the social worker how this work has helped them. The birth parent truly appreciated the efforts made by the resource caregivers to encourage and support contact with her child.

All in all, this great work is happening all over the state of Hawai'i, by resource caregivers, providers and DHS staff, enhancing the lives of the children and families in care. With this training we know that these attitudes of working together will be there in all we do and that everyone will catch the 'Ohana Time wave!!

Trauma's Legacy and the Teenage Brain

By Wilma Friesema, OES

Youth in foster care are often remarkably resilient. They're separated from family, frequently change homes and schools, live with insecurity few of us can imagine, yet they manage to be playful, creative, and enthusiastic. More often than not their courage and vitality are inspiring and fill us with hope.

Yet even with their resilience, foster youth can behave in ways that are baffling and disturbing. Adults may wonder: *Why doesn't he just listen and focus? Why does she get so intensely reactive? Why can't he be more respectful and less aggressive?*

While there are no simple answers, understanding the impact of trauma on brain development can help us, the adults, understand what is going on below the surface. By being aware of trauma's effect on the teenage brain, we may be able to respond more effectively and hold onto the bigger picture during trying times.

As a former psychotherapist who worked with trauma survivors for many years, I came to know this about trauma: feeling powerless is at the heart of it. Whenever we experience a traumatizing event – whether it's an earthquake, a car accident, or being abused as a child – part of what leaves us shaky is that we weren't able to protect ourselves from the experience. We may have found a way to *survive* it, but we couldn't dodge it. According to the British psychologist Harry Guntrip¹, powerlessness is *the* hardest feeling to come to terms with. It's intimately linked to our deepest fears and vulnerability.

We don't like to think of ourselves as powerless, and, really, we're wired not to be. Whenever we're in danger, systems in our brainstem, which regulate heart rate, blood pressure, and arousal states, gets activated and we have either a fight, flight, or freeze response². Think of what happens when you hear a loud car backfire outside your window or when someone slams the door unexpectedly. You jump, there's a little adrenaline rush, you quickly assess if you're in danger. That process happens without thinking or choice – it's an unconscious, automatic response.

That little jump shot of adrenaline is a stress response and is completely normal. Once you identify the loud noise and know you're safe you calm down. We all experience stress responses from real and perceived threats. A certain amount of it is normal and useful; it's what keeps us alert and engaged.

Now think of a child who is exposed to behavior that is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and too often genuinely threatening. This child is dependent on adults who are either the source of danger or aren't dependable or protective. When threatened, the child's automatic defense mechanism kicks in, but she can't fight, flee, or become invisible through freezing – at least not enough to really take care of herself. She just has to take it. Her internal system goes on overload; she becomes disconnected from herself and develops a hyper state of arousal and vigilance. Even after the abuse stops, she is still



¹Guntrip, Harry (1989). *Schizoid phenomena, object relations and the self*. Madison, Connecticut: International Universities Press.

²Perry, B., Pollard, R., Blakley, T., Baker, W., Vigilante, D. (1995). Childhood trauma, the neurobiology of adaptation, and "use-dependent" development of the brain: how "states" become traits". *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol 16, No. 4, pg. 274.

(Continued on pg. 8)

Welcome to FPH's Resource Family Support Services Corner

By Lorie Naftel, RFSS Family Resource Specialist
 Resource Family Support Services (RFSS) is funded by the Department of Human Services



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

Ask the Warm Line



Lorie Naftel

Who is the current voice of the Warm Line and what is her experience with foster families and children?

Aloha, my name is Lorie Naftel and I am the new voice on the Warm Line. I have been with Family Programs Hawai'i Resource Families Support Services for five years. I was initially hired as a Case Assistant for Parent to Parent Mentoring and eventually transitioned to Support Groups Program Coordinator. During the past five years, I have also assisted with answering Warm Line calls and Care to Share requests. In my current position as the Family Resource Specialist, I can finally say I have experience in most of the programs under Resource Families Support Services, providing direct support to adoptive, legal guardianship, kinship and resource families.

In addition to being a mother to my two teen daughters, I have over 20 years of experience in social services in California and Hawai'i. For the last 12 years, I have had the privilege of working directly with teens in foster care in an emergency shelter setting and with families who provide stable and nurturing homes for many children in the foster care system. I can honestly say that the children in foster care are my inspiration; and the adoptive, guardian, and resource families who give of themselves to take on this tireless task are my heroes.

How can I get information about upcoming support groups, trainings and events for resource, guardianship, and adoptive families?

1. You can call the Warm Line at 545-1130 Monday through Friday from 8:30am-5:00pm.
2. You can get information about support services and trainings available to you by going to the agency website at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. Click on the "Resources" tab at the top of the page to search through our State-wide Resource Manuals. Click on the green links on the right for other resources and print out our Resource Manuals. Click on the "Calendar" tab at the top to see support groups, trainings, and events available near you.
3. You can also find out about support groups, trainings and events by visiting our Facebook page www.facebook.com/FPH.RFSS and don't forget to "Like" us!

Care to Share



Do you have something that a family could use? Do you care to share?

Then here's a great opportunity to help children in foster care and their generous resource, adoptive or guardianship families. "Care to Share" is a way for people to share their gently used items with resource, adoptive or guardianship families who need your support.

Items that are in high demand include:

- ◆ Children's desk
- ◆ Clothes for 7 yr old boy size 14-15 (junior)
- ◆ 2 double bed frames and mattresses
- ◆ Feeding booster seat with tray
- ◆ Bunk beds
- ◆ Desk lamp
- ◆ Twin beds with mattress
- ◆ Children's dresser
- ◆ Toddler bed
- ◆ Computer chair
- ◆ Trundle bed (hideaway bed)
- ◆ Dressers
- ◆ Bed sheets (twin)



Examples of items currently available include: Luggage, potty chair, strollers, high chair, and women/children/newborn clothing in specific sizes.

For an up-to-date list of items by island, check out Care to Share at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org, under "Resources"

**Do you have a question? Contact the Warm Line (Mon-Fri 8:30 am—5pm)
 545-1130 (O'ahu) ★ 1-866-545-0882 (Toll-free for Neighbor Islands)
 E-mail: WarmLine@FamilyProgramsHi.org**

This program, brought to you by FPH's Resource Family Support Services (RFSS), is funded by the Department of Human Services

★ Mahalo ★

The following organization generously donated their site to hold pre-service resource family trainings. MAHALO for supporting our resource families and keiki in foster care!

O'ahu:

★ Our Savior Lutheran Church ★

'OHANA REWARDS

Want to know how you could receive a \$200.00 gift card? Would you like your name to appear in a future RAC newsletter?

All you need to do is help us find more homes for Hawai'i's keiki in foster care like these individuals!



Candice Nozaki-Wong
 Brad McDaniel
 Latasha Liftee Rolland
 Becky Kikugawa



Call Hui Ho'omalu today at 441-1117 or 1-888-879-8970 (toll free) for more information!

Trauma’s Legacy and the Teenage Brain (cont.)

caught up in reactively assessing and responding to perceived threats, which includes possible emotional pain. As you might imagine, a child exposed to multiple forms of trauma or chronic abuse – what is known as *complex trauma* – is very vigilant and has difficulty forming relationships and become attached.³

One way to cope with the powerlessness of trauma is to form distorted, unconscious conclusions which, in turn, give a twisted sense of control. Some of my clients’ common conclusions were: *People who get close to me hurt me. It was my fault – no one would love me if they really knew me. Depending on others is dangerous.* Because the abuse happened between a parent and child – that most intimate of relationships – intimacy and dependency become linked to danger. That’s why youth seemingly sabotage relationships just as they’re getting closer – it’s the closeness itself that feels unsafe.

For trauma survivors the stimulated lower part of the brain – which regulates physiological responses, arousal and vigilance – becomes over developed, much like any over-used muscle would do. Repetitive trauma creates an internal response pattern that can get triggered by smaller and smaller outside cues. As a result, a teen doesn’t actually have to be threatened to perceive a threat and react to it.

So how do we help our foster teens who have gone through so much? Is it possible to counter the effects of trauma on brain development?

The good news is, the teen brain is still growing and new response patterns can be developed by stimulating other parts of the brain. Think of it as a form of cross-training so overall strength is increased. Dr. Steven Choy, a psychologist in Honolulu, calls this a re-energized brain.

One strengthening method is predictability and consistency. Even though teens gravitate toward the new, the more consistent and steadier your interactions and expectations are, the more the youth can internally relax. A teen won’t let go of the hyper vigilance overnight and without a lot of testing, but eventually trust can be built and the fear response lessened.

Creating opportunities for the youth to feel *powerful* is also a potent counter to the powerlessness of trauma. Here are a few suggestions: Have conversations where you learn from him, instead of just the other way around. Listen to her desires and goals, and work with her to get the opportunity and support she needs. Give him choices, whenever possible. Engage her in problem solving the disagreements that arise between you. Recognize strengths and praise accomplishments. These are but a few of the many creative opportunities we have to help teens feel powerful.

Unfortunately, for some foster youth, fighting is a way to act out their trauma response and feel strong. However, one key way to positively channel that energy is to help the youth gain a sense of mastery. Whether he’s athletic, artistic, or a computer whiz, supporting his interests and talent can help him develop confidence, self-control, and strengthen his sense of personal worth. To do this, help him set realistic goals as stepping stones to larger goals and track and encourage him along the way. Find community support and be his cheerleader when he’s discouraged and doubts himself. As former foster youth, Mike Peno, said, “If you don’t have anybody that believes in you, how do you believe in yourself? That’s one of the biggest things that foster youth deal with: nobody cares if they succeed, so they think, ‘well, why do I care if I succeed,’ which is sad.”⁵ More than anything, foster youth need adults who invest and believe in them.

Creating a larger community and safety net for teens by involving their family, teachers, coaches, church members, and friends also heals the wounds of trauma. The disconnection and shame of trauma are deeply shattering. The feeling of belonging is a powerful antidote to the isolation created by the abuse. Relationships built during the teen years often become sources of support and encouragement throughout a lifetime.

Healing from trauma can be a lifelong challenge; these are but a few of the ways we can help our youth on their journey to healthy adulthood. Though foster youth can, at times, make our hearts ache and try our patience, helping youth recover from such difficult beginnings is immensely rewarding and satisfying. Just remember, in the daily interactions with our teens we are creating new patterns of responding and relating. Whenever we can encourage rather than discourage, empower rather than disempower, provide security instead of uncertainty, we are truly mending hearts...and minds.

Books About Trauma and Child Development

- Treating Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents: Margaret Blaustein & Kristine Kinniburgh
- Through a Child's Eyes: Peter Levine & Maggie Kline
- The Connected Child, by Karen Purvis, David Cross, and Wendy Sunshine

³Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2011). The adolescent brain; new research and its implications for young people transitioning from foster care, *Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Position Paper*, pg. 26

⁴Choy, Steven, Ph.D (2012). Improving behaviors: re-energizing the traumatized brain in children. *Powerpoint presentation.*

⁵Jim Casey, Adolescent brain, pg. 2

Happy Anniversary!

How long have you been a resource caregiver? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter. We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org
(O’ahu) 441-1125
(Toll Free) 1-888-879-8970

MAHALO TO...

Do you know a DHS-CWS worker(s) that you would like to acknowledge for his/her exceptional work?

Share their name(s) with us and what makes them so special so we can let others know how wonderful they are!

Help! Looking For Stories!

Would you like to share some helpful tips? Got an inspirational story to tell? Know of some useful resources in your community?

These are just some of the many possibilities that you can contribute to this newsletter. Please send them over so we can all benefit from each other’s wisdom!

We would also appreciate any feedback, comments and suggestions on ways that we can improve this newsletter so that it is useful to you. What would you like to see in it? Topics of interest? We look forward to hearing from you!

'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER

Dear Reader,

This article about 'Ohana Conferencing was published in October 2008 in the CASA Judges' Page Newsletter, a nationwide newsletter for Family Court judges. Since its publication an additional 5,000 'Ohana Conferences (OC) have been completed for a total of 13,000 since EPIC's inception.

We've all heard the saying "It takes a village to raise a child." OC's can be a powerful tool to draw on a child's existing village and build family support. For resource caregivers, OC's can provide the safety and structure to meet with family members and find collaborative ways to enhance the well-being of the children in their care. In every OC all participants are respected and everyone's contribution is valued. If you would like to initiate or attend an OC, please contact your DHS social worker and discuss this option.

Mahalo and aloha,
—Wilma Friesema, OES
EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc.



'Ohana Conferences: A Collaborative Approach to Meeting the Needs of Abused and Neglected Children

Wilma Friesema, MFT, Hawaii Model Court

Summary 'Ohana Conferencing is a powerful community-based intervention strategy to divert child abuse and neglect cases from court and assist families involved in the court process.

In 1989, a legal shock wave reverberated throughout human service departments and local communities in the Polynesian world. A new law, the New Zealand Children and Young Persons and Their Family Act, went into effect. The act fundamentally shifted how government went about protecting children from abuse and neglect. At the heart of the change were the engagement and empowerment of immediate and extended family to respond to the needs of their own kin through a process called the family group conference.

Family group conferences are single or serial meetings that highlight family strengths and draw upon the family's wisdom and bonds. Social workers stress the standard of care; the family develops the solution to meet that standard. Personal and community support resources are shared, but the family is given private time to discuss the situation, take ownership of the problem and devise a course of action. Once the group is reconvened, the family, social worker and other service providers agree to, or build on, the family's plan to meet the child's need for safety and security.

The act's shock wave fully hit the shores of the US in 1996 when the 'Ohana Conferencing Project began in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Begun as a collaborative effort by the Family Court of the First Circuit, the Department of Human Services—Social Services Division, and the Wai'anae community on the island of O'ahu, the project was one of four nationwide family group conferencing pilots funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation with support from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The project developed a model for Hawai'i that soon became a powerful community-based intervention strategy to divert child abuse and neglect cases from court and assist families involved in the court process.

In 1998, EPIC, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) Hawai'i corporation was formed to provide 'Ohana Conferencing throughout the state. "'Ohana" means family in Hawaiian, and like its New Zealand counterpart, an 'Ohana Conference pulls on existing family ties to "build and strengthen the network of protection of the extended family and the community for the child." (Hawai'i Revised Statutes Sec. 587-2) Participation is inclusive of any family or community member who may be able to assist in addressing the child's safety and risk factors or transition planning. All requests by an active case participant for an 'Ohana Conference are honored. The result is a culturally relevant, community-consistent response for children brought into the child welfare services (CWS) system.

Respect for all participants and an emphasis on the needs of the children are at the heart of 'Ohana Conferences. This was true in the recent case of Helen (not her real name), a young mother whose three children were deemed at risk because of Helen's drug use.

Helen's mom, the primary caregiver of the children, died in the spring of 2008 and Helen was overwhelmed with grief and the responsibility of single parenthood. CPS became involved after receiving a report of neglect, and an 'Ohana Conference was requested to explore options for the children and their mother.

The children's father was in prison and did not want his family involved, but the extended maternal family stepped up to the plate. Two aunts, three uncles, four cousins, along with Helen, her social worker, two child welfare services observers and an EPIC facilitator and recorder were present at the 'Ohana Conference. Family strengths were identified; service options clarified and legal repercussions were explained. Helen and her family felt the social worker was rooting for them; the social worker saw the resourcefulness and love that existed in Helen's family. An uncle and aunt agreed to take all three children into their home while other family members agreed to supply respite services. Helen, the aunts and uncles cooperated to arrange medical and dental care for the children. Counseling services to help the children and Helen deal with their grief were recommended and accepted. The family, in a supportive tone, expressed their wish for Helen to follow through on substance abuse treatment services so she could be reunited with her children. In the end, a service plan was drawn up that included such treatment. Everyone, including Helen, signed it. To date, Helen and her children are doing very well and reunification is now a viable option.

Since its inception, EPIC has conducted over 8,000 conferences, which have served more than 80,000 participants. In *A Cohort Study of 'Ohana Conferencing in Child Abuse and Neglect* (*American Humane Association Journal*, Vol. 19, number 4, 2005, pg. 36), which compared conferenced and non-conferenced CWS cases, 'Ohana Conferences resulted in cases of shorter duration with fewer court hearings, fewer foster home and shelter placements, and fewer ending in permanent custody (a status similar to that resulting from the termination of parental rights). Satisfaction with the CWS system was also

(Continued on pg. 10)

'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER (cont.)

rated higher when conferences were utilized. What was once an often tense relationship between the state and families has turned into one of deeper collaboration due to a concerted effort to use 'Ohana Conferences. The result is children in foster care are less displaced, which, in turn, strengthens their sense of identity, security and long-term stability. Lead Juvenile Division Judge Bode Uale, observed: "The value of 'Ohana Conferencing is immeasurable. It is the act of getting an extended family together to ask for help for family members and their children who are going to be forever affected by their involvement in the child welfare system. It is reaching for family support when it is most needed. It is giving the opportunity for family to surround their family members and to extend their love by caring for relative children who would otherwise be placed with strangers. It is also giving family members a voice to offer solutions to resolve problems of their own family members. 'Ohana Conferencing takes advantage of family strengths to help their own."

Honolulu Model Court

The Honolulu Model Court at the Family Court of the First Circuit, Hawaii, has been a part of the Victim's Act Model Courts Project in the Permanency Planning for Children Department (PPCD) of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) since November 1997. The Hon. Bode Uale is the current lead judge.

*EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing is funded through the Department of Human Services
For more information about 'Ohana Connections work
contact Wilma Friesema at EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc. at 748-7921*

Grief and Trauma in the Lives of Foster Children (cont.)

opportunity to give them choices. When I was six years old, a judge in his dark robe sat next to me and my older brother. He asked us if we wanted to be adopted or stay with one of our parents. Then he let us talk together as we considered the choices we were given. We decided not to be adopted and that a girl should be with her mother and a boy with his father. It took five years for my mother to regain custody of me. In spite of the trauma I experienced, I felt empowered because it was my choice.

In addition to grief from many life changes, children in care experience abuses or neglect that impacts their development, especially of the brain. A child cannot grieve if they are traumatized. Trauma makes children vigilant. Their coping mechanisms are overwhelmed so they go into survival mode unable to process the grief from parent separation and multiple changes. In order for children to develop the capacity to cope with trauma, they need their sense of safety restored. Children depend on relationships of trust in order to feel safe in the world. Adults can rebuild feelings of safety by being honest, comforting, and open about what has happened to their families. Children have a right to the age appropriate story of why there are people missing in their lives. If you withhold the truth in an effort to protect them, children will perceive it as dishonesty and not protection. They are more likely to imagine worse scenarios than the truth or blame themselves for what happened. Children can handle the truth. They have a right to know their own story.

When families are separated and children live in out-of-home placements, they will adapt to new environments to survive. But, they may be plagued with ambivalence. Ambivalence leads to uncertainty, anxiety, and fear. Children will never forget where they came from or give up on parents no matter what the cause of parental absence.

Children are born with a concept of the perfect mother and father. Even though in reality parents are not perfect, children do not lose this concept. What they see in their parents is what they need. Recognize their need, acknowledge that they deserve to be loved, speak well of their parents, but don't lie.

In adolescence, there may be a tendency to cling even more strongly to or experience a renewed commitment to the missing parents or family as they seek to define their identities. Young adults may question the past; seek keepsakes, pictures, or stories about the missing persons. They may reenact the imperfect behaviors of their parents in an effort to feel connected with them. They may dream of reunification and may even run to the parents they are missing with hope in their hearts.

The image of the perfect mother and father may also be searched for in mentors, teachers, other adults, or even peers. The image shapes their sense of self. The image and the dream of what was and what could be are sources of hope. Grieving and traumatized children and teens need hope. They need safe places for nurturing hope and resilience, like a peer support group and specialized activities designed to build skills that help them cope with the losses in their young lives. If these were integrated into the fabric of our culture, children's grief would likely become less problematic and more normalized. The impact of trauma would be eased. However, there are few and for some children no opportunities to directly address their losses. There are no ceremonies for divorce or separations; no memorials for a broken family.

Images of perfect parents, a sense of belonging, feeling connected to something or someone, and believing they are wanted help build resiliency. Without that, the separation brings about a spiritual crisis leaving children with a sense of desperation and despair. The spirit is nurtured through the crisis of loss when you support children's sense of being connected and that comes through family. Honor the family and you honor the spirit.

For more information about Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i and their programs to help children who are grieving, visit: www.kidshurttoo.org or contact them at: 545-5683.

Hawai'i Adoption and Permanency Alliance (HAPA) will also be having a conference titled, "Helping Adopted and Foster Youth Cope with Grief and Loss" on Saturday, November 3rd, 8:30am-1:30pm at Kalihi Union Church. For more information visit: <http://familyprogramshawaii.org/event/hapa/> or call the Warm Line: 545-1130.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

O'AHU:

- ★ **Nov 1 (Thurs): Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5:30 pm-8 pm. Goodwill 'Ohana Career and Learning Center (Kapolei). See below for details.
- ★ **Nov 3 (Sat): H.A.P.A. Conference.** "Helping Adopted and Foster Youth Cope with Grief and Loss" with Joseph Bloom, LCSW. 9 am-1:30 pm. Register online at <http://familyprogramshawaii.org/event/hapa/> or call the Warm Line at 545-1130.
- ★ **Nov 9 (Fri): Windward Resource Families Support Group.** 6 pm-8:30 pm. Faith Baptist Church. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245. *This group will not meet again until Feb. 8, 2013.
- ★ **Nov 16 (Fri): Waianae Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30 pm-8 pm. 'Ohana Ola O Kahumana. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245.
- ★ **Nov 17 (Sat): National Adoption Day Celebration at the Honolulu Zoo.** A fun day for families that have adopted. 10 am-1 pm. Register on-line at www.familyprogramshi.org
- ★ **Dec 1 (Sat): 2012 Holiday Party.** Neal Blaisdell Center. Visit FamilyProgramsHawaii.org for more information and to register online. On-line registration will be available the last week of October. Call the Warm Line at 545-1130 for more information.
- ★ **Dec 6 (Thurs): Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5:30 pm-8 pm. Faith Baptist Church (Kailua). See below for details.
- ★ **Dec 14 (Fri): Central O'ahu Resource Families Support Group.** 5:30 pm-8 pm. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 x245.

WEST HAWAI'I:

- ★ **Oct 24 (Thurs): Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5 pm-7:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity (77-165 Lako St). See below for details.
- ★ **Nov 5 (Mon): West Hawai'i Resource Families Support Group.** 5 pm-7:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity, Kailua-Kona. RSVP to the Susan Acacio at 885-5043.

EAST HAWAI'I:

- ★ **Nov 10 (Sat): East Hawai'i Resource Families Support Group.** 12 pm-2:30 pm. Hilo Missionary Church. RSVP to Michelle Carvalho at 987-5988.
- ★ **Dec 4 (Tues): Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5 pm-7:30 pm. Church of the Holy Cross (440 West Lanikaula St.) See below for details.

MAUI:

- ★ **Nov 8 (Thurs): Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5 pm-7:30 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center-Annex Bldg (1791 Wili Pa Loop). See below for details.

KAUAI:

- ★ **Nov 5 (Mon): Talk Story Session & Training-Caregiver and the Courts.** 5 pm-6 pm (Talk Story Session) & 6 pm-8 pm (Training). Lihue Lutheran Church. See below for details.

2nd Quarter Training: Caregivers and the Court



Resource Families Support Services (RFSS) is happy to have Judith Wilhoite from It Takes An 'Ohana (ITAO) and a Family Court Judge co-present "Caregivers and the Court" for the statewide 2nd quarter training. Trainings will take place in O'ahu, East Hawai'i, West Hawai'i, Kauai, and Maui. The trainers will talk about the importance of Resource Caregivers' involvement in court hearings for their children in foster care, how to support foster youth attending hearings, and provide tips on attending and participating in your foster child's court hearings. Look out for the training flyer in the mail! For more information, please contact the Warm Line at 545-1130 (O'ahu) or 1-866-545-0882 (Neighbor Islands).



PATCH publishes a quarterly newsletter -- Training Tracks, to inform the community of our upcoming trainings around town, and provide the latest child care news and information to professionals and the public. PATCH offers over 100 FREE child care workshops open to all caregivers such as family child care, preschool and infant and toddler staff, before and after school care programs, parents, resource caregivers, medical professionals, babysitters and informal child care.

Please visit our website or contact your local PATCH office for the latest news and training schedule:



www.PatchHawaii.org

O'ahu: 808-839-1988

Maui: 808-242-9232

Lāna'i & Moloka'i: 1-800-498-4145

Kauai: 808-246-0622

Hilo: 808-961-3169

Kona: 808-322-3500



ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY!



Family Programs Hawai'i's 2012 Annual Holiday Party is right around the corner! All resource, guardianship, and adoptive families on O'ahu are invited to come join us on December 1st at the Neil Blaisdell Exhibition Hall for a day of food, fun, and festivities. This exciting event includes lunch, gifts and activities for the children, entertainment, and photos with Santa! Look for your invitation in the mail at the end of October, visit us at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org, or call the Warm Line from O'ahu at 545-1130 for more information. See you there!

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Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

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E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalū facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.

This committee, the newsletter and many of the represented agencies are supported and funded by Department of Human Services contracts.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalū
Department of Human Services
EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing
Family Court
Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalū & It Takes An 'Ohana
Resource Caregivers
Adoptive Parents
Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition
HOPE INC, Inc.
Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalū
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work