National Adoption Awareness Month

Dr. Nancy Chavkin
A Message from the Director

November is National Adoption Awareness Month and a wonderful time to reflect on the importance of adoption in children’s lives, advocacy, and adoptive parents. Statistics show that 114,550 U.S. children are in the foster care system waiting to be adopted.

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption was recognized as a public charity in 1992 with the goal of a permanent, loving family for every child. The foundation is celebrating National Adoption Awareness Month by providing free resources and information about adoption. These resources include: ways to reach out to your local media, order free public service announcements and videos, engage people in your faith community and neighborhood, encourage employers in your area to offer adoption benefits, check out the Step-by-Step Guide to Adoption, or engage in National Adoption Day.

Wendy’s Wonderful Kids is a program under the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. Wendy’s restaurants, its customers, and other affiliates raise funds for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. The foundation will then award grants to local adoption organizations to enforce aggressive programs on placing foster children with adoptive families. The goal of the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids program is to work with transitioning children in foster care to adoptive families.

If you’re looking to start a family or want to help a child in need, consider the option of adoption.

HHS Releases Latest User Manuals

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Administration for Children and Families released the final volumes in its Child Abuse and Neglect User Manual Series.

The volume titled The Role of First Responders in Child Maltreatment Cases: Disaster and Nondisaster Situations gives different descriptions of child maltreatment and what signs to look for of possible child maltreatment. The volume also provides information about initial response and investigation. The first responders on the scene need to be prepared for just about anything, emergencies and non-disasters.

The volume titled Community Partnerships: Improving the Response to Child Maltreatment provides a step-by-step guide on how communities can collaborate with agencies and organizations to try to create a safe and fun environment for children. The main purpose is to help children thrive and succeed in these new environments. The manual discusses the overall benefits of having good partnerships between the community and agencies.

For more information on these volumes, please visit Child Welfare Information Gateway.
Welcome One and All!

The Center for Children and Families would like to welcome the newest Title IV-E field placement stipend students for Spring 2011.

From Region 8, San Antonio, we welcome MSW student Kimberly Barnhill, and BSW students Kristen Torres and Lee Ann Cloud. From Region 7, Austin, we welcome BSW student Hannah Sindlinger and MSW student Brittany Mays.

The Center would also like to welcome aboard the newest Grant Specialist, Abbi Mott. Abbi hails from the Texas School Safety Center, where she was a training coordinator for the law enforcement division at the center. Abbi is originally from Taylor, TX and now resides in New Braunfels.

Jackie Johnson is another new addition to the Center as well. Jackie accepted the position of Administrative Leadership intern. Jackie will begin her field practicum/Graduate Assistant internship at the Center on January 18, 2011. Jackie’s supervisor will be Dr. Nancy Chavkin, director of the Center. Jackie will mostly be involved with writing grant proposals. She received her undergraduate degree in social work from Texas Southern University, in Houston, TX in 2008. Jackie currently lives in San Marcos, TX with her 3 year old daughter. Jackie’s main hobbies include traveling with her family and spending as much time with her daughter as possible. Welcome Jackie, glad to have you on board!

Room to Breathe!

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services presents a campaign called Room to Breathe! This campaign’s purpose is to help prevent infant sleeping deaths and to provide safe sleeping tips for parents.

According to DFPS’s Web site, on average, almost 400 Texas babies die in their sleep each year—suddenly, unexpectedly, and without a clear explanation or due to accidental suffocation or strangulation.

Many parents may not realize that they might lay their baby down the wrong way, or let their baby lie with them in bed, when both behaviors are unsafe for the baby. We know that parents want to be close to their children all the time, but sometimes we need to give the babies just a little room to breathe.

The Web site provides the do’s and don’ts regarding ways to properly care for your child when putting him/her to sleep. Always be alert and aware for risk factors that could lead to the infant’s death. Always place your infant in his/her crib because that is the safest place for them to sleep.

The campaign urges parents to not put the babies in an adult bed with them because the bed doesn’t provide the proper safety that the baby needs. For more tips, warnings, precautions, statistics, and public service announcements, please visit the DFPS Web site.
IV-E Spotlight: Heather Brostad, BSW-Dec. 2004


The Title IV-E program really helped me prepare for the job. It gave me a realistic view of what I would be doing. It gave me more time to prepare and learn the job before I was actually case assign able. I think that this realistic view of the job is what kept me with the department.

I believe that the Title IV-E stipend helps the agency with retention of staff who participate in the program. If someone asked me for advice about the Title IV-E stipend program, I would tell them to DO IT!! It is one of the best programs that I could have ever participated in. A lot of students think CPS is not the place for them, but they don’t really know what CPS entails. There are numerous positions in the agency that you can apply for once you complete your contract regarding the stipend.

I have been employed with CPS for 5 years and have moved up to a state office position rapidly. There is room for upward movement if you can hang in there for the years that you are “paying back” your time.

Alicia Olguin, BSW-2004, MSW-2005

Position: CPS Investigator

I feel the stipend program gave me an incentive to begin working in the social service agency field, specifically with CPS. It helped me get a foot in the door and expose me to what CPS is like and I haven’t left yet.

If someone asked me about the Title IV-E stipend program, I would advise them to embrace the opportunity and learn all they can from this experience.

It is definitely beneficial in determining the area and placement you would like to be at once you graduate.

Upcoming Foster Parent & Ethics Trainings

Save the dates! Make sure you mark your calendars for the upcoming training workshops on ethics for CPS/Title IV-E foster care and adoption workers and their supervisors in Texas.

Ethics workshops will be led by Dr. Dorinda Noble, Ph.D., LCSW, who is the Director of the School of Social Work at Texas State, and by Mr. Andrew Marks, LMSW, coordinator of the BSW program, and Senior Clinical Lecturer at the school.

Date and Locations:
San Antonio, Jan. 27, 1:30 pm-4:45 pm
San Antonio, Jan. 28, 9 am-12:15 pm
Austin, March 31, 1:30 pm-4:45 pm
Waco, April 1st, 9 am-12:15 pm

The two workshops in San Antonio will be held at 3635 SE Military Dr. Rm. # 2C20. Locations for the workshops in Austin and Waco have not yet been determined.

Foster parent training dates have been set for Feb. 26, March 26, and April 16 for 2011. Locations and times have not yet been determined.

To register for the workshops, fax your information to 512-245-1958, or you can send an e-mail to Trainings4E@txstate.edu. Attendees can earn 3.0 C.E.U credits.
Who Turned Out The Lights?

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is joining the Texas Association of Broadcasters (TAB) for a year-long radio and television campaign, Don’t Be In The Dark, to help parents realize the importance of researching and knowing which daycares are regulated. These campaigns will run nationally until July 2011.

The purpose of the campaign is to help parents become aware of where to look and what to look for in regulated daycare settings. When searching for a regulated daycare, make sure the facility has a license, experienced employees, a good education program, and that the facility is in a safe, healthy, and fun environment.

The campaign urges parents to be involved in the care that their children are receiving. Parents, talk with your children and ask them how they are enjoying their time at the day care. Also another way to be involved is to schedule meetings with the facility’s caregivers to monitor the progress of your children.

Parents are urged to take off blind folds and find the light! For more information regarding tips or locations of regulated day cares in your area, please visit the Web site of Don’t Be In The Dark.

Hoping and praying to adopt??

Wanting to adopt a child, but having a hard time going through the adoption process?

Co-authors Dr. Cynthia Martin and Dru Martin Groves provide their professional and personal knowledge of the adoption world in Beating the Adoption Odds.

The book is more of a simple manual to help guide you along your journey through the adoption process.

The book provides the ins and outs on how to get through this process smoothly. The guide assists potential adoptive parents on where to begin, how to approach an adoption agency, how to avoid delays, and much more.

Want to make a difference in the lives of children? Here’s an opportunity if you’re all about peace and love. New Life Children’s Center, a residential treatment center for troubled teen girls, presents the All You Need Is Love benefit.

The 12th Annual Make a Difference Gala will be held February 26, 2011, at Austin Music Hall. The silent auction and cocktails will begin around 5 pm. The dinner, live auction, music, and dancing will be from 6:30 pm -11 pm.

The musical entertainment will be provided by a group who call themselves The Eggmen. The Eggmen are a Beatles Tribute Band dedicated to the groovy sounds and vibes of the 1960s. This gala is sure to be one hip and far out scene! For more information about tickets, sponsorship, and donations, please visit the Web site of New Life Children’s Center.