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*Fostering Families Today: Parenting Teens July/August issue*

## BEING A PARENT TO TEENS

Tips for Tackling the Teen Years



I have always loved teenagers — which, according to most people — makes me crazy.

Now that I'm parenting a teenager, I'm even crazier and actually loving almost every minute of it. I don't really want to jinx myself because I know she's only 14, and we have a ways to go and who knows what her brother's going to be like when he gets there. But the honest truth is, I love this age with all of the messy emotional baggage and minute-by-minute ups and downs.

I've listened to friends huff about teenage attitudes, too much makeup, eye rolls, disrespect and so much more. I'll admit, when you're parenting teens, you definitely need a tough skin, have to work a little harder and strategize delivery techniques for messages you really want to instill. But what every parent of a teen should be equipped with is a set of glasses that lets you see them as the little children they once were — and still are in many ways — in their rapidly growing up bodies.

The reality is, they are so new to trying to figure out the great big world that even adults have trouble navigating some days. Their hormones are all over the place, they feel the pressure of school, and deal with all sorts of new social relationships and expectations as they figure out who they are in this world. It can be a tough time and at the end of their day, home is the safe place they can go to decompress and let it all out — anger, attitude and all.

Now for just a minute, think about the awkwardness of going "home" to a family that you've maybe only known for a few days or weeks. Even if it's been a couple of years, does this place really feel like home or a safe place?

According to Child Trends, youth older than 14 experience more placement instability, with 40 percent of teens having experienced four or more placements. Only 15 percent of children younger than 14 have experienced four or more placements.

So besides this great issue filled with all sorts of advice from the experts on how to engage, love and support teenagers, here are a few tips of my own from a mom in the midst of her own teen parenting journey.

1. Always remember it's not about you.
2. Keep your sense of humor and help them find their own because these years can be heavy enough without it.
3. They still need your time and attention — give them the best version of yourself.
4. Listen without judgment.
5. Give them the grace and space to have a hard day.
6. Ask yourself how much the issue at hand matters in the grand scheme of things. Let the rest go.
7. Walk away if they've got you triggered and angry.
8. Seek help for yourself and for them when things seem like too much, or if there is risky or unsafe behavior.

I know a lot of these are easier said than done and believe me, there are days I have to remind myself to take a deep breath. But I hope they help you just a little as you build a relationship with the teen in your home and help them successfully launch into adulthood. Teens still need parents just as much as the little ones do.

Kim Hansel Editor  
of *Fostering Families Today*





## A message from the President

Hope everyone had a great Summer and getting ready for the Fall. I'm sure many of you have had a busy time getting children ready for school. I know we have had lots of Foster Parents to join our ranks over the past year. That is one reason I have added some very important information in this newsletter to help all of you on your journey as foster and adoptive parents and kinship foster parents. We are seeing a rise in the number of Kinship Foster Parents and the number of those going on to the Kinship Guardianship program. We have hosted several trainings around the state to bring more awareness to this need in our state. If your group would like the training in your area please contact us.

This year was election year for the AFAPA Executive Board. Officers beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and serving the next 2 years are President William Buddy Hooper, Vice President of Foster Care Mary Smith, Vice President of Adoption John King, Treasurer Darla Works-Nelson, Secretary Shirley Merrills.

The Executive Board will meet October 12<sup>th</sup> to name Regional Representatives to the Board. If you are interested in serving as a Regional Representative please contact me at [buddy@afapa.org](mailto:buddy@afapa.org) by October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. If we have 2 or more interested in the same region the Executive Board will decide who will be selected and in some cases there could be more than one selected in a region and they would share the duties of that region. Regional Representatives are reimbursed for travel to attend meetings and or training that is approved by the president or board.

Regional Representatives shall:

1. Represent the interests of foster and adoptive parents within his/her region.
2. Assist in the development and growth of local foster and/ or adoptive parent associations with the region.
3. Perform other duties as designated by the president or the executive board.

AFAPA Chapter Membership dues are due October 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Chapter Membership will be available to any foster and adoptive parent association in Alabama, approved by the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association board of directors. An association receiving chapter membership must operate in a consistent manner with the by-laws and constitution of the state association. Benefits to local associations receiving chapter membership include attending meetings, receiving all mailings, and the state association accepting tax-deductible contributions for the local association. All monetary contributions will go through the state association treasurer and ninety percent (90%) of the funds returning to the local association. The retained funds will be used for the purposes of the association as set forth in the by-laws and constitution of the Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, Inc. Guidelines and procedures will be provided to any qualified local association chapter membership.

The following are required to be considered for Chapter Membership:

- \_\_\_\_ 1. Annual budget and/or financial statement.
- \_\_\_\_ 2. Constitution & By-laws of the county association
- \_\_\_\_ 3. Current list of officers with addresses and phone numbers
- \_\_\_\_ 4. Signed chapter membership agreement below.
- \_\_\_\_ 5. Payment of \$150.00 sent to AFAPA at address below by check or money order.
- \_\_\_\_ 6. Name of food bank (if used).

For more information be sure to visit  
[afapa.org](http://afapa.org) or facebook page  
Alabama Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.  
Phone 888-545-2372 email [afapa@afapa.org](mailto:afapa@afapa.org)

## NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY 2019

President Jimmy Carter proclaimed it a national holiday on August 3, 1978.

September 8, 2019 in the USA

National Grandparents Day takes place on September 08, 2019. National Grandparent's Day is a secular holiday celebrated in the United States since 1978 and officially recognized in a number of countries on various days of the year, either as one holiday or sometimes as a separate Grandmothers Day and Grandfathers Day.

National Grandparents Day in the U.S. is the first Sunday after Labor Day, in September. The holiday is expected to grow in significance over the next decade and beyond as the number of grandparents in the United States rises from 65 million in 2011 to 80 million in 2020 as a result of the baby boom. Grandparents in America are also increasingly responsible for child care and support. (With material from: Wikipedia) The text "National Grandparents Day" has been taken from [www.cute-calendar.com](http://www.cute-calendar.com)

## GRANDPARENTS GROUP

Training available around the state for local associations, Grandparent groups, and others who could benefit from attending this training. Contact Buddy Hooper [buddy@afapa.org](mailto:buddy@afapa.org) or Keith Lowhorne Chair of Grandparents as Parents committee [keith@afapa.org](mailto:keith@afapa.org)

**Equipping Kinship, Kinship Guardianship, and Safety plan Families with the tools, resources and support needed to succeed.**

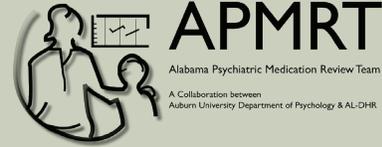
- What is kinship guardianship
- What is Kinship Care
- What is a safety Plan
- What are board payments/Subsidies/ Kinship Guardianship payments
- Medicaid and other Insurance
- Social Security
- Support Resources

## MEET ERICA



**Erica**, born August 2002, is a beautiful young lady who is fun, loving, and caring. She has not allowed anything or anyone to hold her back in life. She is striving to be the best she can be. Erica is determined to be successful in life. She loves to read books, listen to music, write, and shop. Erica wants to be in a loving household with people who are willing to accept her for her and grow to love her as their own. She desires to show a new family the love she wanted to give to her biological family.

## APMRT NEWSLETTER



August 2019, The Alabama Psychiatric Medication Review Team (APMRT) continues to provide free behavioral and medication review services to foster families and residential facilities seeking treatment across several counties in Alabama. These services include helping to reduce problem behaviors observed in foster children including tantruming, aggression, and hoarding, among many others. We are also able to review a child's current medications and make recommendations provided by licensed physicians. To date, APMRT has served in foster homes, residential/psychiatric facilities, schools, and directly in the community.

Among those served was a 12-year-old, male foster child who was defiant with his chores and homework, regularly argued with his foster mother, and was highly disruptive in school. APMRT provided parent training and a simple plan for completion of chores and homework. The child has since completed all of his chores, increased his grades in all of his classes, and is able to speak to his mother instead of argue when they disagree. The child was ultimately adopted and welcomed into their family.

Another case involved a 16-year-old, male foster child placed in a residential facility where he engaged in aggressive behaviors against his peers. His aggression was so pervasive, the child was not able to leave the facility to visit his family on weekends or holidays. Additionally, the facility was at risk of revoking his placement. An APMRT clinician provided the facility with an individualized plan for this child, and together, the clinician and staff were able to help the child reduce his aggression significantly. Now, the child has not been aggressive in months and is able to have weekend passes to visit his grandmother outside the facility.

We wish to continue our efforts and hope we may be able to serve you. APMRT is a research collaboration between Auburn University's Psychology Department and Alabama Department of Human Resources. Free services are provided to Autauga, Bullock, Chilton, Elmore, Jefferson, Lee, Macon, Montgomery, Russell, and Shelby counties. For more information, please visit our website where you will find free resources including Parent Training videos and how to submit a referral for services.

<http://www.cla.auburn.edu/apmrt/>

## INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

The Independent Living (IL) Program is a program that shall be developed in every county to guide youth toward success as adults. This is accomplished by providing independent living services for all eligible youth as authorized in their ISP and, when possible, through group activities. IL services shall occur concurrently with continued efforts to achieve permanency.

### Youth Covered By Policy

All youth ages fourteen (14) years and older served by DHR shall receive IL services. This includes:

- Youth in DHR custody who are currently living in a licensed approved out-of-home care placement or who are on a trial home visit;
- Youth receiving on-going protective services; and
- Youth ages eighteen through twenty years who (1) have been discharged from the system of care, (2) were in foster care on or prior to their eighteenth birthday, and (3) have returned to DHR to request services.

### Independent Living Program Goals

To enable youth to successfully achieve a smooth transition into adulthood, they must be provided appropriate services and linked with resources that assist them to develop into competent adults. Services available to youth include:

- Assistance in obtaining high school diploma, GED, vocational training, or college degree; • Preparation for post-secondary;
- Career exploration;
- Materials necessary to obtain or retain employment;
- Training in daily living skills;
- Education in preventive health activities;
- Development of interpersonal skills;
- Assistance in understanding physical and emotional changes of adolescence;
- Preparation to assess their need for and obtain their own medical, dental, and mental health services when they leave care; and
- Provision of personal and emotional support through interactions with adults and mentors as youth age out of foster care.

Public Law 113-183 pertaining to youth 14 or older concerning Case Planning

SEC. 113. EMPOWERING FOSTER CHILDREN AGE 14 AND OLDER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR OWN CASE PLAN AND TRANSITION PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL ADULTHOOD. (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 475(1)(B) (42 U.S.C. 675(1)(B)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “With respect to a child who has attained 14 years of age, the plan developed for the child in accordance with this paragraph, and any revision or addition to the plan, shall be developed in consultation with the child and, at the option of the child, with up to 2 members of the case planning team who are chosen by the child and who are not a foster parent of, or caseworker for, the child. A State may reject an individual selected by a child to be a member of the case planning team at any time if the State has good cause to believe that the individual would not act in the best interests of the child. One individual selected by a child to be a member of the child’s case planning team may be designated to be the child’s advisor and, as necessary, advocate, with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard to the child.”.

## MEET ADRIAN



**Adrian**, born 2002, is a happy and talkative young man. He is very positive and confident. He describes himself as humorous and someone that everyone looks up to. He likes being a positive role model for others.

Adrian is very friendly and enjoys talking and texting his friends regularly. He is a very good student and would like to continue his education after high school. Adrian is kind and shows concern for others. He is excited about the possibility of finding a permanent family.

## FOSTER PARENT BILL OF RIGHTS

It has been more than 15 years since the Foster Parent Bill of Rights was established by the Alabama State Legislature. Over the past 15 years AFAPA has been around the state training foster parents and DHR workers about the FPBR. There are new foster parents and new DHR workers who have not received the training. We are always open to scheduling training in counties and are open to doing it for both foster parents and workers.

I wanted to ask the question **“Has the Foster Parent Bill of Rights helped you as you take care of foster children in your home”**

The following are questions that might be asked about each one of the foster parent bill of rights.

1. Have you been treated with dignity, respect, trust, value and consideration as a primary provider of foster care and a member of the professional team caring for foster children?
  2. Have you received information about the Foster Parent Bill of Rights? Did you receive this information while attending GPS classes?
  3. Have you received a concise written explanation of your role as a foster parent?
  4. Have you been offered training and support to improve your skills to care for your foster children?
  5. Have you received training on foster care policy, foster parent handbook, foster family homes minimum standards, the Therapeutic Foster Care Manual, and the Conflict Resolution Process?
  6. Have you had the opportunity to provide input to the department in identifying the types of resources and services that would meet the needs of children in your care and have you been able to advocate for these services without threat of reprisal?
  7. Have you been given current and accurate information about the children who are placed with you?
  8. Have you been given written explanations of the plan for the placement of the children in your home? Have you been given information that would allow you to determine if this is a proper placement for your family?
  9. Do you have a staff person representing the department on call 24 hours a day seven days a week to aid you in receiving departmental assistance?
  10. Do you receive a fair and equitable board payment? Are you able to care for the children in your care with the amount of board payment you receive?
  11. Have you felt like you could refuse placements in your home without threat of reprisal?
  12. Have you received information about meetings and appointments concerning your foster child? Have you been able to give input to the ISP team to be used in the case planning and decision-making process? Does the ISP work for you?
  13. Have you had the right to request an advocate to be present with you at all meetings with the department, including, but not limited to, ISP's, administrative hearings, the conflict resolution process, the adoption process, and the allegation process? Have you ever been denied the right to have an advocate present with you?
  14. Have you received notice and an opportunity to be heard concerning all court hearings involving the child in your care?
  15. Have you had the right to communicate with professionals who work with the foster child in your care?
  16. Have you had the right to communicate with the child's birth family, other foster parents of the child, and prospective and finalized adoptive parents of the child with ISP approval and without threat of reprisal?
  17. Have you received necessary information relevant to the care or the child in your care?
  18. Have you been given the first consideration as a resource as an adoptive parent for the child in your care?
  19. Have you been advised of your rights to respite care and have you been given respite when requested as per respite policy?
  20. Have you been given information about any allegations of children in your home? Have you been given information about the allegation process? Were you given a written report within 5 days of allegations that were found to be not indicated on the county level?
  21. Have you been given the right to copies of all information relative to your family and services contained in the personal foster home record?
  22. Have you been offered the right to a mediation process when a conflict has gone unresolved?
  23. Have you been given the right to appeal the closing of a foster family home by the department in accordance with the appeal procedure which is also the conflict resolution process and without threat of reprisal?
- If you can answer no to any of these questions AFAPA would like to hear from you. You can email [afapa@afapa.org](mailto:afapa@afapa.org) or phone 1-888-545-2372. Your calls and emails will be kept confidential and information will not be shared without your permission.

## MEET JESSIE & RAVEN



**Jessie**, born November 2006, has a funny, engaging personality and likes to help others. He does well in math. He is very personable and loves to be around others.

**Raven**, born September 2008, likes to watch her favorite shows on TV and relax. She is good at communicating. She loves to talk and hang with friends!

## MEET JESSIE & RAVEN



**Isis**, born March 2001, loves to write poetry and songs. She enjoys singing both in a choir and on her own. She also loves to play basketball and is very active in the church youth group. Isis likes to be with her friends and hang out. Isis is looking for a two parent home where she is the only child in the home as she desires one on one attention. Isis wants to go to college and become a doctor to help other people. Isis is currently in honor classes. She is charming and a joy to be around.

## MEET BRENNEN



**Brennen**, born September 2009 is a very friendly and happy child, despite his medical history. He requires 24/7 care. He loves music and stuffed animals. He likes to listen to music and watch cartoons. He desires a stable and loving home.



**Heart Gallery Alabama**

To learn more about the children waiting for adoption, visit [www.heartgalleryalabama.com](http://www.heartgalleryalabama.com)

## ISPs

This policy provides guidelines and procedures related to the individualized service planning process which results in the development of an individualized service plan (ISP). The ISP, developed in partnership with the child and family planning team, is the actual case plan that is designed to achieve the desired case outcome. It also serves as an organizer of case activity and a tool for communicating with the individuals involved with the children and family.

Effective ISPs are based on a comprehensive, individualized assessment of the strengths and needs of children and their families. Assessments of children and their families shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- developmental, behavioral, emotional, educational, and family history;
- children's strengths and needs related to behavioral, emotional, educational, social, and medical/physical areas of functioning;
- children's needs related to developing skills for independent living or transitioning into adult service systems; and
- any crises that are likely to occur, and the family members' strengths and needs related to dealing with the crises.

### Required Reviews

**Initial ISPs will be reviewed at a meeting of the child and family planning team that is held within thirty (30) days of the date the initial ISP was developed.**

Thereafter, **ISP reviews must occur at least every six months from the date of the initial ISP** and more frequently as needed. Any member of the ISP Team can request an ISP whenever needed.

### NOTES FROM PRUDENT PARENT TRAINING

#### Foster Children Driving:

With the appropriate permit or license, DHR can authorize or give permission for children in foster care to drive. The preference of the parents is to be addressed at the ISP when possible. The situation in which ISP team members including parents are not in agreement, DHR may request permission from the court for the child to drive. DHR shall schedule an ISP team meeting to discuss the child's desire to drive and to provide team members an opportunity to consider the request.

Permission for driving shall be in compliance with the Graduated Driver License Act Number 210-735. The Act provides requirements for each state of the Graduated License which includes: Stage I (Learner's Permit); Stage II (Restricted License) and Stage III (Unrestricted or Regular License). Staff and caregivers should be familiar with this law.

Children must have liability insurance to drive an automobile. If children in foster care or their birth family purchase the insurance, it is necessary for DHR to verify that the insurance is current and that renewals of premiums have been paid. The foster parents may choose to add liability coverage for the child in their foster home to their insurance policy.

Children in foster care are not eligible to be covered under the State General Liability, Automobile Liability Program. The Department cannot purchase insurance through federal, state, or local funds.

Permission for a child in DHR custody to purchase/own a vehicle shall be obtained from the parents or the court. The child must have a valid driver's license and liability insurance.

### Hunting

Foster care providers shall permit a child in their care to hunt only if they have obtained written permission of the institution, agency, or individual holding custody. Permission for a child in the temporary custody of DHR to hunt shall be granted only by parents or the court. If the child is in the permanent custody of DHR, permission shall be obtained from the court.

### Swimming and other recreational activities

Before allowing children in out of home care to engage in recreational and/or social activities, foster parents should consider whether the child has the safety equipment and necessary permissions and/or training for the child to safely engage in an activity including but not limited to boating, rock climbing, recreational vehicle use, sports or camping.

Minimum Standards states children must have direct supervision by someone 16 or older who is trained in water safety (this is in regard to pools and water safety). Children and youth in care will be encouraged to take swimming lessons from a certified swimming instructor. Families participating in leisure activities involving bodies of water, must also be trained in water safety even if they do not have a pool, spa, hot tub or other body of water on their foster family home /adoptive resource property. This may be in or out of water, but must be in a classroom setting – not online training.

### Playing Football

The Department's Out of Home Care Policies, section on Maintaining Family Connections provides that parents be contacted for consent in support of their children participating in activities which could result in potential danger.



Alabama  
Foster & Adoptive  
Parent Association

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## AFAPA NEWSLETTER INFO:

Articles can be submitted to Buddy Hooper, Editor. E-mail submissions should be addressed to [afapa@afapa.org](mailto:afapa@afapa.org). Otherwise, mail to AFAPA 1091 County Road 1659 Cullman, AL 35058. Deadline dates fall the first of the month in February, May, August, & November.

### SCHEDULE OF MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

**Shelby** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday each month 6PM at Alabaster First United Methodist Church

**Russell** – Last Thursday each month 6:15PM at the Project Green Light House

**DeKalb** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month except December 6PM at Plainview Church of God

**Colbert** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month 6PM alternating between Highland Park Baptist and First Baptist Colbert Heights.

**Madison** – 1<sup>st</sup> Monday each month 6PM at Madison County DHR. Free childcare, like the mcfapa facebook page (Madison County foster and adoptive parent association) and there will be a rsvp link along with who is speaking each month. Relative resources and foster and adoptive placements are welcome to attend.

**Tuscaloosa** – Last Thursday of the month except November and December 6PM dinner provided at University Church of Christ just off McFarland Blvd.

**Covington** – 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month except July and December 6PM at Bethany Baptist Church food and childcare furnished.

**Mobile** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month except May and December 6:30PM Room 601 at DHR building.

**Jefferson** – 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday each month at Bessemer DHR on even number months and at Jefferson DHR on odd number Months except November. Christmas Party earlier in the month at Bessemer DHR.

**Montgomery** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month 6PM at Eastwood Presbyterian Church 1701 E. Trinity Blvd Montgomery 36106. Dinner and Childcare for birth to 12yo. Giveaways each month.

**Chambers** – 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday each month at Valley Baptist Church in Valley, Alabama

**Marshall** – 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 6PM called as needed at Marshall County DHR. Check Marshall County Foster Adoptive parent association.

If you know of a local association that meets regularly and would like it announced in the newsletter please contact Buddy Hooper at [buddy@afapa.org](mailto:buddy@afapa.org) with the information.