



# Family Support Services

OF NORTH FLORIDA INC.

SERVING DUVAL AND NASSAU COUNTIES

» ESPECIALLY FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

OCTOBER | 2008

# Adoption news

## Adams recognized for foster and adoption efforts

Jim Adams, Family Support Services' (FSS) CEO was in Washington, D.C., last month to receive an Angel in Adoption Award from the Congressional Council on Adoption Institute.



U.S. Representative Ander Crenshaw (R-Jacksonville) nominated Adams for his work in foster care and adoption services. He received a pin and certificate presented by a member of Congress.

This comes on the heels of another honor—receipt of the Fourth Judicial Circuit Award, presented to Adams

at the Florida Department of Children and Families Dependency Summit in Orlando.

Under Adams' leadership, the judiciary, FSS and partner agencies finalized more than 500 adoptions in Duval and Nassau counties—a state record.

In addition, FSS and the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) have embarked on a pilot project to change the face of foster care in Florida. DCF investigators and FSS case managers now provide intense services to families having problems, to keep the children in the home.

“Jim is one of the strongest advocates for the safety of children and an innovator who is designing a system to strengthen families to keep kids safe in the family circle,” Nancy Dreicer, Northeast Florida Administrator for DCF said. “It is because of his strong and effective leadership of the agency and in the community that he is able to get so much done for the children of our area.”

### News Briefs

#### Mark your calendar

The annual Children's Holiday Party will be held for the second year from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 13, at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. All relative caregivers, adoptive parents and foster parents are invited to a party featuring entertainment, Santa, gifts and pizza. Plus, all the families can spend the remainder of the day touring the Zoo free!

#### Free cybersafety classes

If you would like to take a cybersafety course to keep your children safe online, please call Debbie Campbell at (904) 521-5628. A training session is being scheduled for late October.

#### Medicaid enhanced benefits notification

If your child is a Medicaid recipient and has WellCare, Healthsease or United Healthcare as HMOs, the Agency for Health Care Administration sends out periodic notices that the child has earned enhanced benefits, which are cumulative.

The credit allows you to purchase health-related items from pharmacies. You can buy cough syrup, band-aids, thermometers, bandages, etc. with the credit. Once the child is being taken care of by a relative, or adopted, the notification of benefits should be mailed to your address in the child's name.

# Ensure your children's safety on Halloween

From iVillage.com comes some advice to keep your children safe while trick-or-treating on Halloween.

- ✓ Establish ground rules for your older children before they go out, and know their route.
- ✓ Costumes should be a light color or have reflective areas so they can be seen in the dark.
- ✓ Costumes should be flame retardant, and not too long or baggy to prevent tripping.
- ✓ Masks, wigs and hoods shouldn't obstruct your child's vision; do face makeup instead.
- ✓ Let children carry only flexible knives, swords or other props.
- ✓ Don't let young children trick-or-treat alone.
- ✓ Children should only walk, not run, on sidewalks—never on the street.
- ✓ Welcome trick-or-treaters with your porch or exterior lights on.
- ✓ Consider giving older children a cell phone to be able to reach you in case of an emergency.
- ✓ They should stay in familiar neighborhoods, only approach houses that are lit and have a designated time to be home.
- ✓ Check all candy before allowing children to eat it.
- ✓ Patrol your street occasionally to discourage speeding motorists and acts of malicious mischief.
- ✓ Don't give homemade or unwrapped treats to children—even if you know where the treats came from.



## “A large part of caregiving involves managing the youth's behavior.”

Here are some basic concepts and definitions:

**Behavior**—everything a person does—thoughts, feelings, and actions that can be observed and measured. Behaviors result from the person's experiences (immediate and past). Especially important are the things that happen right after a behavior—the consequences. Being specific about the behavior leads to better communication with the child, makes it easier to observe and reduces inconsistencies.

**Consequences** can increase or decrease future behavior. There are also consequences that have no effect on behavior. Reinforcement is a positive consequence that increases the chance that a particular behavior will occur again.

Examples of reinforcing consequences:

- You put money in a coke machine (behavior), and you get a coke (consequence).
- You flip the switch on your computer (behavior), and the computer turns on

(consequence).

- You tell a joke (behavior) and your friends laugh (consequence).
- A child is crying (behavior) in the grocery store, and the caregiver buys the child a candy bar (consequence).

Consequences that decrease chances of future behavior:

- Touching a hot stove (behavior), burning your hand (consequence).
- Speeding through a red light (behavior), police catch you and give you a ticket (consequence).

### Types of Reinforcing Consequences

1. Social interaction
2. Verbal praise
3. Appropriate touch
4. Tangible items
5. Appropriate privileges
6. Breaks from tasks or work

Use reinforcing consequences after you see an appropriate behavior happen that you want to see more of.

Part 1 of 2—Source: Essential Tools for Positive Behavior Change. Shadianna Singh-Vinson, FSS Crisis Specialist

## Foster parent association meetings

The Greater Jacksonville Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23, at St. Johns Presbyterian Church, 4275 Herschel St.

The Northeast Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet Monday, Oct. 13, at the Northwest Branch Library, 1755 W. Edgewood Ave.

The Nassau County Foster and Adoptive Parent Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16, at the Northeast Florida Baptist Assn. building on U.S. 17 North.

