

Especially for Adoptive Parents
and Relative Caregivers

Earth Day • April 22



Family Support Services
OF NORTH FLORIDA INC.

SERVING DUVAL AND NASSAU COUNTIES

APRIL | 2008

Community businesses provide zoo memberships to adoptive families

Dennis Pate started something that he hopes will go statewide.

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens executive director, with a little help from his friends, gave a year-long membership to a Callahan family who adopted their youngest daughter last year.

Bank of America donated \$25,000 to provide the no-cost yearly zoo family memberships to about 250 families like the Gonzalez's who have adopted children since July 1, 2007. Another 500 families currently on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, trying to retrain for or find better jobs, are also eligible.

"These annual membership passes will bring new opportunities for new families formed by adoption and for those low-income families to see the outstanding zoo exhibits," Gregory Smith said.

Smith, Northeast Florida Bank of America market president, said the bank was pleased to partner with the zoo, WorkSource, Florida Department of Children and Families and Family Support Services of North Florida

(FSS), who handles adoptions in Duval and Nassau counties for the state. Nancy Dreicer, DCF northeast region director, was pleased to offer the program.

"Whether it is families who've been struggling with financial issues or new families created through the joy of adoption, these zoo memberships will bring children and parents together," Dreicer said.

Families with adopted children since July 1, 2007, can apply for their zoo memberships through FSS in Duval County. Needy Families can go through WorkSource. Parents have to agree to have their names and addresses released to the zoo. Then, the zoo will mail the families the membership cards.

Meanwhile, Frankie and Teresa Gonzalez said this was only the family's second trip to the zoo – the first being the FSS Children's Christmas Party before Christmas.

She home-schools their children Kayla, 14, Megan, 13, Jared, 10, and newly adopted 2-year-old Alicia, who was ready to go see the

elephants after shaking hands with all the dignitaries.



Nancy Dreicer, DCF northeast region director, shakes hands with Alicia Gonzalez at the Jacksonville Zoo.



Have a Medicaid credit waiting?

Medicaid's enhanced benefits account program sends letters to FSS about dollars that accrue in your child's account that reward you for taking the child to the doctor for regular visits, immunizations, etc. Foster Parent Liaison Carlese Floyd will have them with her at any of the foster and adoptive parent associations in Duval and Nassau counties. Come to the meetings and

see if one has been sent for your child.

The enhanced benefits credit allows you to buy things like diapers, baby shampoo, pain relief products, vitamins, sleep aids, diabetic products and blood pressure monitors. For a complete list of products and for general information, go to http://ahca.MyFlorida.com/Medicaid/Enhanced_Benefits.

Find a summer camp

Visit these sites for more information: www.jax4kids.com; www.jacksonvillefamily.com and www.firstcoastparent.com. Also, any children interested in attending a baseball or softball camp over the summer, please call Debbie Campbell, (904) 421-5628.

FSS collects used cell phones

FSS will be collecting old cell phones that you have in your desk drawers, home cabinets, car glove boxes and that are being used as door stops. FSS can now sell your old cell phones as a fund raiser. Tell your family and

friends as we want to end clutter and keep the environment clean.....and at the same time you will be performing a gift of charity. We receive a minimum of \$5 per phone and as much as \$150 depending on the make and model. This is one way we raise money for the "extras" for our foster children.

Mark the calendar

The eighth annual Scholarship Awards Luncheon will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 19 at Evangel Temple, 5755 Ramona Blvd. Children who are on the A-B Honor Roll, have perfect attendance, good citizenship or improved academic performance during this school year. Children who don't qualify for an award are still encouraged to attend.

Join the party

Earth Day Ecology Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Jacksonville Landing. There will be entertainment, hands-on activities, make and take craft items, animal encounters and a children's area.

Foster Parent meetings

The Northeast Florida Foster and Adoptive Parents Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, April 14, at the Northwest Branch Library, 1755 W. Edgewood Ave.

The Greater Jacksonville Foster and Adoptive Parents Assn. will meet at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 24 at St. Johns Presbyterian Church on 4275 Herschel St.

If you would like to submit a story idea, calendar item or ask Jim Adams, FSS CEO, a question, please email mary.hurst@fssnf.org.



All Things Behavioral... **Manners**

Good manners improve relationships, make a person likeable, show respect for others, and form the basis for a civil society. But good manners do not come naturally. A child races to the front instead of waiting a turn because being first gets the goodies immediately. A child must learn good manners but more importantly must learn that good manners work.

Caregivers who model good manners show children that saying “please” and “thank you” have benefits, such as getting what you want and having others treat you better.

Caregivers can also teach manners by telling the child what is expected, for example, “I want you to say ‘please’ when you ask for a cookie,” and then making sure that meeting the expectation works. If saying “Please, may I have a cookie?” gains a cookie, then saying “please” will keep happening. If it doesn’t work, it will go away.

When caregivers also avoid attending to bad manners, then children learn very quickly what is expected of them if they want to receive the benefits of good manners.

The Behavior Analysis Services Program helps caregivers to teach children behave with good manners. To enroll in our classes—free!—please contact your Foster Parent Liaison at (904) 421-5800.

David E. Lee, MS BCBA, University of Florida, Behavior Analysis Services Program
Got a question? Email davelee@ufl.edu



Lindsay's Corner

As of July 2007, there are important changes in state law that effect eligibility for the Road to Independence Program (RTI) for teens, ages 16 or older, who are adopted.

If you adopt a child 16 or older who has spent the previous six months in foster care and whom a judge finds dependent, then he or she is eligible for the RTI program, as well as adoption benefits.

The RTI program teaches youth, ages 13-23 life skills including budgeting, finding and getting a job and handling finances.

We currently have many teenagers available for adoption. If you are interested in adopting a teen or want to find out more about RTI eligibility for adopted teens ages 16 or older, please call (904) 421-5800.

Lindsay Warren is an Adoption Specialist at Family Support Services of North Florida. You can email her at lindsay.warren@fssnf.org.



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Preventing childhood poisoning

A poison is any substance that can cause harm to your body. Children can be poisoned by swallowing or inhaling poisons or absorbing them through the skin.

Common poisons include cleaning products, cosmetics and personal hygiene products, art supplies, alcoholic beverages, houseplants, pesticides, lead, prescription and over-the-counter medicines, overdoses of iron-containing supplements including pediatric multi-vitamins and carbon monoxide from unvented heaters.

Most unintentional poisonings occur in the home:

- Know which household products are poisonous and never leave them within a child’s reach.
- Keep foods and household products separated, keeping all household products in their original containers.
- Do not mix cleaning solutions together.
- Always read medicine labels and follow dosage instructions.
- Turn on the light when giving or taking medicine so you can clearly see that you have the right medication and dosage.
- Never refer to vitamins or medicine as candy.
- Avoid taking medicines in front of children and never drink medicines from the bottle.
- Store household products and medications in high cabinets and use child-resistant cabinet locks.
- Remove poisonous plants from in and around the home, including poinsettias.
- Teach friends and relatives to keep their medications and other potentially poisonous items out of children’s reach.

Poison Control Information Hotline: 1-800-222-1222