

Family



Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 21 Number 8

Newsletter

August 2018

AFFM's mission is to provide the training, guidance, knowledge and resources needed to handle the complex issues encountered by resource families as they open their hearts and homes to children in need.

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. (AFFM) provides support services for all adoptive, foster, and kinship families. This includes kinship families in the informal system (not working in conjunction with DHHS).

Child welfare is dependent upon a myriad of state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Decisions concerning families and innocent children are rarely easy, and are usually fraught with highly emotional issues. AFFM is dedicated to assisting families to help children find the security they deserve. AFFM understands every situation in fostering, adoption and kinship care is unique and families will face challenges. AFFM strives to continue to be a resource for families and is available 24/7.

AFFM Beliefs:

- AFFM believes that Maine's children have the right to be a member of a healthy, safe, and stable family
- AFFM believes that all adoptive, foster and kinship families deserve to have unconditional support to help build on their strengths and to provide the best quality home environment possible
- AFFM believes that access to services to enhance families abilities and develop new skills is imperative
- AFFM believes all families who open their homes to Maine's children deserve unbiased support

Services provided by AFFM include but are not limited to:

◇ Allegation Support

◇ Training

◇ C.A.R.E.S. Monthly Support Groups

◇ Resource Family Mentor Service

◇ Lending Library

◇ Direct Support

◇ Resources/Material Goods

◇ Passes and Discounts

◇ Formal and Informal Kinship Support

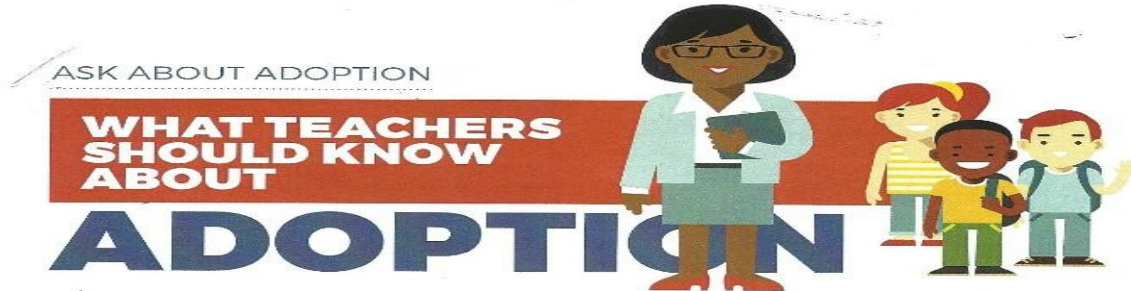


*Learn more about the support services AFFM offers by calling 1-800-833-9786
or visit www.affm.net*

Adoption and Schools

Below is an article from the Quality Improvement Center for Adoption & Guardianship Support and Preservation that may be useful to share with your child/children's teacher on the topic of adoption.

AFFM wishes you a successful and happy school year!



Adoption can be a wonderful outcome for children who are not able to live with their birth parents. However, when adopted children join their new family, they bring life experiences that might include maltreatment and/or trauma. As a result, during the time leading into adoption and after the adoption is finalized, these children might exhibit some unique behaviors in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for educators to understand the reasons underlying the behaviors versus solely focusing on the behaviors. Common emotions and issues among children who have been adopted include the following:

- grappling with issues related to identity, belonging, or attachment
- managing complex and/or non-traditional relationships and roles with their birth family;
- experiencing loss and grief; and
- figuring out how to be in a family of a different culture or ethnic group.

Outside of the family network, teachers and other school personnel play the largest role in children's development. Because children spend a great deal of their daily lives in school settings, it is important for teachers to be aware of adoption and the behaviors that some children - both pre- and post-adoption - might exhibit in the classroom. Many teachers have found it extremely beneficial to develop a relationship with the adoptive parents and work with them to determine a classroom routine that works well for their child.

CREATING AN ADOPTION SENSITIVE CLASSROOM

Teachers can help create a classroom that is sensitive to adoption by viewing assignments through the eyes of a child who has been adopted. Without intention, school assignments, classroom decorations, and even the selection of information shared about a country of heritage can potentially cause stress to a child who is adopted. The list below suggests some small changes teachers can make to ensure their classroom is inclusive for families formed through adoption.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Be sensitive about developing assignments that require knowledge of birth history
 - Family trees can be difficult, stressful activity for children who do not know the details of their birth history.
 - Assignments that study a child's biological traits can be difficult if children do not know one or both of their birth parents.
 - Assignments that require bringing in baby pictures can be difficult if the child does not have any pictures.

HOLIDAYS

- Be aware that holidays can be difficult times for some children and try to tweak these celebrations to be inclusive of all children.
 - Birthdays, Mother's Day, and Father's Day might bring up a wide range of emotions in children who are not living with their birth parents.
 - Adopted children might celebrate an "adoption day" or "coming home" day that is just as important as a birthday.
 - Mother's or Father's Day celebrations can be changed to Parent Day celebrations.

LESSONS

- Recognize that, before being adopted, some children might have experienced one or more forms of trauma that will require some variation in the teaching process or accommodation in classroom routines.
 - Be aware that isolating punishments such as time out or separation from the class might trigger a negative or unexpected response in some children.
 - If a child exhibits a negative, unexpected response, remain calm and help to get the child regulated before discussing discipline or consequences for the behavior.
 - Allow extra time for transitions between activities.
 - Write out a schedule that enables the child to visually follow the schedule structure and organization.
 - Inform the child when there is going to be a change in routine.

ADOPTION STATUS

- Recognize that children might be sensitive about their adoption status.
 - Maintain confidentiality; refrain from referring to a child's adoption within the classroom or in conversation with other school personnel unless the child has disclosed the information himself or herself.
 - Intervene if classmates are making comments or asking questions about a child's family composition.
 - Do not assume that a child of a particular nationality speaks the country's language or knows about the country's culture.

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for AFFM's 22nd Annual Spring Conference Friday April 12th and Saturday April 13th 2019 at the Hilton Garden Inn Bangor!

Holiday Gift Giving Program 2018

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program is gearing up for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Resource families are invited to add their children's names, gender, clothing size and age to a wish list for holiday gifts. Once again, the amazing people from the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee will work to provide holiday presents to kids in AFFM programs.

Give the office a call at 1-800-833-9786 and have your child's information and gift wish ready. We ask that you keep requests to under \$50.00 per child.

The sooner AFFM has the information the more likely we are to fulfill the children's wishes.

AFFM will take requests starting September 1st until November 21st.

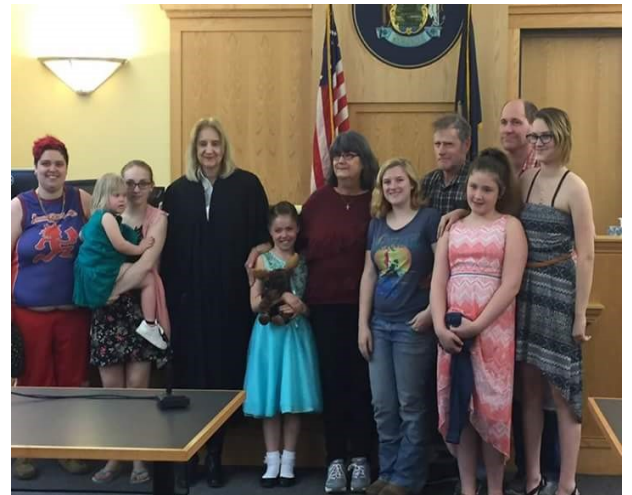


Adoption Announcements!

Kurt and Alicia Dunn are excited to announce the adoption of Ayden, Eli, and Amiyah on June 28, 2018!



On April 24, 2018 after 10 months of intense labor Savannah Faith Warren joined the Warren Warriors making us 12 strong! (10 kids and 2 adults). We could not be happier.



Adoption Announcements Continued!



Malakhi Kornsey was adopted March 28, 2018, and joins brothers Justin, Daniel, and Alan in Waterville, Maine.

Congratulations to the Kornsey family!

Jennifer Madore and Shawn Merchant are pleased to announce the addition of their son, Jeremy, to their family on June 7, 2018! He joins older siblings Jordan, Taylor and Shawn.



Stacy and Wayne Gaspar are pleased to announce the adoption of their daughters, Sierra and Danica on May 10th, 2018! They join their older brother Aidan, and the Gaspar's adult children, Alex and Sara.

Have you recently legalized an adoption? Would you like to share the exciting news with others? AFFM would love to create an adoption announcement in the Family Ties newsletter. Send a write up and photo (if you wish) to meagan@affm.net.

Did you know that after you've adopted you are still able to access AFFM's support services? Call AFFM today to learn about post adoption support!



The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act Signed into Law

On Monday July 9th, the president signed the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act into law. First introduced by Senators **Susan Collins** (R-ME) and **Bob Casey** (D-PA), the law will create a federal advisory council to support grandparents and other relatives raising grandchildren and create a one stop shop for information for the families.

To learn more about this law visit:

<https://www.aging.senate.gov/press-releases/collins-casey-introduce-bipartisan-bill-to-support-grandparents-raising-grandchildren-as-opioid-epidemic-increases-their-numbers>

Information provided by: *Generations United*



AFFM will host pizza parties throughout the state to celebrate Grandparent's Day on Sunday September 9, 2018! This event is open to all relatives raising their relatives. Keep an eye out for more information on AFFM's Facebook page, website and email list serve.

Thank You!

AFFM's Saco office would like to thank Ferry Beach Park Association for once again allowing our families to celebrate a "Family Fun Day" and enjoy the beautiful surroundings on Saturday June 30th. Attendees enjoyed games, give aways, a barbeque, face painting and an awesome performance put on by Mad Science of Maine! Thank you to AFFM board member Tammy Cutchen for creating beautiful works of art on the kids faces. Thank you to Rana O'Connor from Spurwink for joining in on the fun and adding to the face painting with temporary tattoos! Thank you to Hether Anderson and Jessica for manning the grill, especially in the heat! AFFM would like to extend a thank you to Poland Springs, Shaw's and Walmart for donating to the barbeque. Last but certainly not least, thank you to Roberta Altamari and the youth camp at Ferry Beach Park Association for taking the time to put together goodie bags for all the children in attendance.



We look forward to seeing you all next year!

Thank you to the Maine Department of Bureau of Parks and Lands for once again providing AFFM with state park passes. At this time, the state park passes have all been spoken for. AFFM typically receives state park passes early springtime, keep an eye out for an announcement next year to secure your pass! (Passes are available to all licensed foster homes).

AFFM Statewide Resource Family Support Groups



At times meetings are cancelled due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, cancellation notices are sent out via AFFM 's email list serve and Facebook. Families are urged to call or email info@affm.net to be added to this service. For more Information and to RSVP for the support groups please call AFFM @ 1-800-833-9786 or 827-2331. AFFM asks families to RSVP 3-4 days in advance so the facilitator and childcare provider can plan accordingly.

Key: A= Adoptive, F=Foster, K= Kinship, CC= Childcare is available upon request

Augusta – Kinship only/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30 – 8:00 pm at the Buker Community Center (22 Armory Drive) call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864.

Augusta – A/F/K/CC: 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).

Bangor – A/F/K/CC 2nd Tuesday of the month from 5:00-6:30pm at Redeemer Lutheran Church (540 Essex Street).

Belfast— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Monday of the month from 5:30-7:00pm at Christ The King Church Room 330 (9 Field Street).

Biddeford – Kinship only/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00–Noon at J Richard Martin Community Center (189 Alfred Street).

Bridgton – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Monday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Community Center (Behind Reny's) (15 Depot St)

Brunswick – A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church (25 Pleasant St).

Caribou—A/F/K: 4th Monday of the month from 10:00am-noon at Caribou CHCS, 7 Hatch Drive #120. No RSVP needed.

Damariscotta— A/F/K: 1st Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Lincoln County Assembly of God Church (672 Main Street).

Dover-Foxcroft – A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone & Sebec conference room (897 W Main Street).

Ellsworth – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Moore Community Center (133 State St.)

Farmington – A/F/K/CC: every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6 – 7:30 pm at the Gwilym R. Roberts Learning Center (by the administration office), UMF rooms 001 and 003

Houlton– A/F/K: 3rd Monday of the month from 10:00am – noon at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street. No RSVP needed.

Lewiston/Auburn– A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Opportunity Enterprises, *use the back door* (400 Center St. Auburn)

Lincoln – A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00–7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple (124 River Road).

Machias – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm @ University of Maine Machias Torrey Hall Rooms 228 & 230 (116 Obrien Ave).

Norridgewock— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at First Congregational Church (36 River Road).

Orono – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at the Orono United Methodist Church (36 Oak Street).

Presque Isle – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Road.).

Rockland—A/F/K/CC: 1st Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM-7:00PM @ Grace Bible Fellowship (30 Sherer Lane).

Richmond— A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 5:30PM-7:00PM at Isaac F. Umberhine Public Library (86 Main St.)

Sanford— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM-8PM at Curtis Lake Church (38 Westview Drive)

South Paris— A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (9 Olson Road).

South Portland– A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Eastpoint Church (345 Clarks Pond Pkwy South Portland).

Wells— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Wells Congregational Church (1695 Post Road, Wells).

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
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Affiliated With:
The North American Council on Adoptable Children
National Foster Parent Association
Generations United

Partnering With: Department of Health and Human Services

FAMILY TIES THE NEWSLETTER OF ADOPTIVE & FOSTER FAMILIES OF MAINE,
INC PUBLISHED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES. PLEASE DIRECT

COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMILY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program

New Resource Families Welcome! You are now receiving the Family Ties newsletter as part of your complimentary membership to AFFM! Learn more about AFFM and services offered by calling 1-800-833-9786 or

Locations: 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine
& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

Phone: 1-800-833-9786

Email: info@affm.net

Website: www.affm.net

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