INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

Hoosier Heartland Adoption Newsletter

Serving Adoptive Families In Indiana

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Welcome!

We are back in the swing of things for school—it must be Autumn in Indiana. And, for some this kind of transition time can bring out both subtle and overt behaviors in children. Whether it be learning disabilities, bullying, disrespect, lying, or the inability to concentrate most of these are due to early the childhood trauma they suffered. We have all learned that with some children, adopted or not, their buttons will be "pushed" by authority while others respect it, most of these reactions come from fear. In turn, the teachers may have a reaction that is also fear-based. The way these issues are handled by administrators, teachers, parents and the child can make all the difference in the world. If the approach is calm and loving our children will de-escalate faster.

This newsletter contains ideas and solutions for parents and our hope is that this year is the best year ever for your child in their academic environment.

Thanks again for all you do for our children!

Contact Ann Arvidson at: ***ann.arvidson@dcs.in.gov***

What parents can do to insure their child is getting the best out of their education?

Be actively involved with your child's school. Notebooks passed back and forth between teacher and parent, e-mailing weekly or daily to keep a continuing dialogue with teachers is important. Be positive, teachers do have a lot to do and many personalities to deal with on a daily basis. Make sure that they understand that you want to "keep them informed" to make their job easier and be supportive of them.

At home be sure to ask your child "if they had fun at school today" (it helps them realize it can be fun). Help them with their homework (we can learn something still!). Read to them or read together out loud, talk about what they have read—ask questions that will promote their critical thinking skills. You may guide them to an answer but, make them think!!!

What is INSOURCE and Why Should You Call Them?

In 1973, a group of parents of children with disabilities met informally in South Bend; their common mission: to secure more educational services for their children. By 1974, they had met with local disability groups and school corpo-

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rations, and established the Task Force on Education for the Handicapped, Inc. In 1980, the group was awarded its first Federal Grant, and the Indiana Parent Training Program, (IPTP), was born. Today, every state and territory of the United States has at least one federally funded PTI. The Task Force also developed the first Educational Surrogate Parent Training Program in the United States, which became a model for other states.

The Board of Directors decided in 1989 to officially change the name of the Task Force to the Indiana Resource Center for Families with Special Needs, or INSOURCE. INSOURCE is now also supported by a generous State Grant through the Indiana Department of Education, called the Collaborative Parent Involvement Project, (CPIP). (CPIP encompasses Educational Surrogate Parent training, among other activities.) The Regional Rehabilitation Training and Information Project, (R-PIT), which operates in conjunction with three other Midwest PTIs through a federal grant, is a part of INSOURCE as well.

Even though INSOURCE is made up of varied programs, we have a common mission. Our Mission Statement officially reads:

"The mission of INSOURCE is to provide parents, families and service providers in Indiana the information and training necessary to assure effective educational programs and appropriate services for children and young adults with disabilities."

To this end, our activities include:

- Providing Individual Parent Assistance via phone, e-mail and in-person
- Conducting 3-day Regional Parent Resource (RPR) Trainings
- Conducting Basic Special Education Rights and Responsibilities Trainings, including Special Education regulations
- Training Individuals about the Transition to Adult Services
- Conducting Educational Surrogate Parent Trainings

For those who serve as foster parents, the last activity listed is the most valuable. Foster parents are required, by federal and state law, to be trained in Special Education regulations, and how the process works, in order to serve as their foster child's Educational Surrogate Parent.

The laws we're speaking about include, on the federal level, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), and at the state level, Article 7, Rules 32–47. These are some of the principles of IDEA:

- Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Procedural Safeguards
- Appropriate Evaluations
- Parent Participation

These principles are further supported by, and expanded upon, in Indiana's Article 7. Article 7's definition states that a parent is one (1) of the following:

- Any natural or adoptive parent whose parental rights have not been terminated or restricted in accordance with law
- A guardian, including a court-appointed temporary guardian
- A person with legal custody, such as a grandparent or other relative, or other adult who accepts full legal responsibility and with whom the student lives
- An educational surrogate parent appointed in accordance with this article
- Any student with a disability who is eighteen (18) years of age and has not had a guardian appointed by a court

Once a child is legally adopted, you are, of course, entitled to the same rights as any biological parent. As a trained Educational Surrogate Parent you are entitled to the same educational rights as any biological parent.

This means that, educationally, you have the right to:

- Refer the student for Special Education and sign for an Educational Evaluation to determine eligibility
- Participate as a member of the Case Conference Committee, the body which determines eligibility and services
- Advocate for the student throughout the process—keep the lines of communication open
- Invoke your Procedural Safeguards, including the right to Due Process, when the schools aren't appropriately serving the student

Guaranteeing these rights is where IN Source comes to the rescue. When things don't seem to be going right—your child is NOT progressing—or communication has broken down between you, the parent, and school personnel; the answer to the question, "Who y'gonna call?" would definitely be INSOURCE. We are not miracle workers, but we know the law, and when we get involved, we are not as close to the situation as you, the parent. Your emotional attachment to the student, (your child!), makes it difficult to remain objective. At times you don't know what questions to ask; we can assist

a parent prior to a meeting about what they might hear, and what they may request, or inquire about. INSOURCE can also give you an idea of what an appropriate IEP (Individualized Education Program) should look like on paper. And remember IEP, FAPE, LRE, etc.; we can help save you from drowning in that sea of acronyms!

For those questions you have for which we don't immediately have answers, we will find the answers for you. Our focus is Special Education, but we can refer parents to other appropriate agencies for independent educational evaluations, (not done by the schools), Medicaid and Medicaid Waivers, insurance access problems, information about guardianships, etc. Of course, we can help parents access information about their child's particular disability. While we are not able to refer one psychologist, therapist or attorney over another, we can give you an idea of where to start looking.

INSOURCE can't be everywhere, but with the Program Specialists in our central office, (one of us speaks Spanish), Regional Program Specialists throughout the state, plus our network of volunteer Regional Parent Resources, we are available to listen to you. So if we can't be there in person, we are never far away. In addition to a toll-free phone number, we have a website with some very useful links.

We recently added an On-Line Community, which has been very positively received.

We have materials available, including a Parent Information Packet we've developed and update frequently. Plus we have access to other booklets published by the Indiana Department of Education/Center for Exceptional Learners and the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. Many of our materials are available in Spanish.

Please don't hesitate to contact us. Here are the particulars of how to do it: *Toll-free:* (800) 332-4433, *Local:* (574) 234-7101, *Fax:* (574) 234-7279 (You can leave us a message anytime, day or night; regular hours are 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., Mon–Fri.)

E-mail: ***insource@insource.org***,
Website:: ***http://www.insource.org/***
On-Line Community: ***www.myinsource.org***

Being a parent is really the most challenging, yet rewarding, vocation that anyone can undertake! Being an adoptive parent adds to that challenge; parenting an adoptive child, who also has special needs, requires a resourceful person—one who realizes they can't do it all on their own. As adoptive parents, you have "go-to" people for many different issues; let INSOURCE be your "go-to" people for Special Education issues.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Dory Lawrence from INsource for this informative article.

What else can we do for our children as the school year begins?

Extra-curricular activities are important for our youth as they enhance their abilities in the areas of:

- **Socialization/communication**—peer interaction as well as good adult role models. Fitting in and just doing "what kids do."
- **Teamwork**—There is no "I" in team. It is about working together towards a common goal.
- **Rules**—Following the "rules of the game" and directions are definitely lessons that are transferable to our life situations.

The above suggestions are all the lessons they will need to know as they grow older. Additionally, it gives parents a little "down time" whether you are running errands while they are at practice, or cheering on the sidelines this is time for you!!! Latchkey or after school programs, other than sports, also offer the opportunity for children to be able to hone their interpersonal communication skills through structured play.

Resources for Educators who work daily with adopted children

Adoption Awareness in School Assignments, a guide for parents and educators: by Christine Mitchell. A great resource for your child's school. This pamphlet was prepared in connection with Tapestry Books, specializing in adoption books
www.tapestrybooks.com, info@tapestrybooks.com
Phone: 877-266-5406

Christine lists other resources in this manual:

Adoption and the Schools: Resources for Parents and Teachers, by FAIR, Families Adopting in Response,
info@fairfamilies.org, www.fairfamilies.org.

Family Tree and Other Projects,
http://www.AdoptionClubHouse.com, Homework Help,
http://www.adoptionclubhouse.org/03_homework/04_familytree/00_overview.html.

Adoption Awareness in Our Schools, The Center for Adoptive Families, a project of Adoptions Together (AT), ***caf@adoptionstogether.org***; or ***www.adoptionstogether.org***.

S.A.F.E. at School: Support for Adoptive Families by Educators, The Center for Adoption Support and Education, Inc. (CASE), ***schoettle@erols.com***; or ***www.adoptionsupport.org***.

Teacher's Guide to Adoption, Family Helper, ***helper@familyhelper.net***, ***www.familyhelper.net***

An Educator's Guide to Adoption, Institute for Adoption Information, ***http://adoptioninformationinstitute.org/education.html***

New Programs:

A new contract has been awarded for the RAD training of trainers which will begin in January of '09. Twenty people including therapists, LCPA staff, home-based workers, and residential staff will be trained in each DCS region, for a total of 360 participants, in Reactive Attachment Disorder theories and hands-on emotional regulatory therapies. From there we will begin working to heal families, not just children. By working together the behaviors that are associated with these issues should decrease and consequently the term "forever family" will mean just that. Look for more information from the Children's Bureau about this program. If you are interested in attending a training, contact Kate Creason at the Children's Bureau: 317-545-1392.

Adoption Curriculum for therapists:

Thank you to all who recently filled out the survey about Post Adoption Services to help develop a curriculum for therapists who will be "certified" in the area of adoption. We are keeping the survey on the website for those of you who may want to give us more feedback to help us grow and serve adoptive families. The survey can be found on the DCS website ***http://www.in.gov/dcs/index.htm*** from there go to Permanency and then Adoption and look for the Post Adoption Services Survey. Thanks again!

Resources:

An adoptive parent writes:

"One of the best sources of information and support out there is the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC). They have a representative in each state who is an expert on adoption assistance in that state. NACAC has an annual conference, held in a different location each year. It is outstanding and I would recommend it for professionals as well as adoptive parents."

North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)
970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106
St. Paul, MN 55114
phone: 651-644-3036
fax: 651-644-9848
www.nacac.org

Indiana State Representatives:
Dawn Cooper
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dawncooper1@att.net

Jaye Domer
Phone: 260-387-5465
E-mail: ***jayese@comcast.net***

Upcoming trainings— Hold These Dates!!!!

Adoption Forum

September 18–19, 2008 Marten House, Indianapolis, IN go to ***www.IAACCS.com*** for more information. This is the 36th year for this conference!!

IARRCA

This annual conference will take place September 17-19, 2008 at the Hilton North.

IFCAA

November 20–22, 2008 at the Marten House in Indianapolis. This is the 36th year for this conference!