

# fostering FUTURES

Rhode Island Foster Parents Association

No. 7 – Issue 1 – January 2008



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## New Survey Reveals Millions of Americans Have Considered Foster Care Adoption; Yet Majority Are Confused about the Process and the Children Waiting for Adoption

Data also show that Americans are considering adoption from foster care more often than any other form of adoption, including private infant and international adoption

(Dublin, OH) – A new national survey released last month reveals that 48 million Americans have considered adoption from foster care; yet a majority of Americans hold misperceptions about the foster care adoption process and the children who are eligible for adoption. According to the survey commissioned by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, two-thirds of those considering foster care adoption are unnecessarily concerned that biological parents can return to claim their children and nearly half of all Americans mistakenly believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality adopting from foster care is without substantial cost.

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# Dr. Day Care

Dear Dr Day Care,

I have a foster child who is twenty-eight months old and calls me "Lady" in a disrespectful way. I would prefer to be called Mommy Jane. How can I teach my foster child to change his attitude and not call me Lady?

Signed,

Foster Parent

Dear Foster Parent,

May I suggest each time your foster child calls you Lady, simply rephrase with the name you want to be called, and repeat the words. For example:

**Child:** "Lady please give me a drink."

**You:** "You would like Mommy Jane to get you a drink."  
(Use a pleasant, friendly voice.)

Here is another example:

**You:** "Mommy Jane would like you to take a bath in five minutes."

**Child:** "Lady, I like to take a bath."

**You:** "Mommy Jane is happy you like to take baths."

Continue to use the words you want your foster child to call you and one day he will call you Mommy Jane!

When he finally says the words "Mommy Jane" with a quiet and happy disposition, you should offer reinforcement. For example:

**You:** "I am so happy you called me Mommy Jane" or  
"Thank you for calling me Mommy Jane, I like that name."

You can also give a positive touch on your child's back, head or shoulder.

Keep in mind that the word "lady" might have been used in his previous home to obtain an adult female's attention. With your kind, caring, reinforcing ways, your child's frame of mind and understanding of the word will change.



**SHARON O'KEEFE, ESQ.**

(Former R.I. Assistant Child Advocate)

## Adoptions

- DCYF\*
- Private
- Step Parent

**401-247-1740**

\*Accepts DCYF subsidy as payment

Dear Dr Day Care,

My foster child has special needs and I am having a very difficult time finding child care for her. In less than a year, she has been exited out of two child care programs. She is a great second grader, but a bit hyperactive. Do you have any suggestions where I can find a child care placement?

Signed,

Needs Day Care

Dear Needs Day Care,

There is a specialized child care service program in RI called therapeutic child care. The program is partially funded out of the Department of Human Services (DHS) office. Therapeutic child care programs offer specialized care for children with special needs. You can obtain a list of licensed child care programs who offer this service from Options for Working Parents (OWP) 401-946-2300. For specific questions on therapeutic child care for children birth through adolescence, call Rita Boie at 401-475-7707 x 250.

*Dr. Day Care is actually Mary Ann Shallcross Smith, Ed.D., owner of Dr. Day Care Enterprises which encompasses Kids Klub, Inc., Dr. Day Care's Child Development Center for Learning and Play, Comprehensive Child Care Services of Rhode Island, Women's Business Talk Show, and is also co-founder of Child Care Connection. Dr. Day Care welcomes your questions as they relate to child care. Please contact her at 1-877-333-1393 ext. 222 or email her at [drdaycare@kidsklubri.com](mailto:drdaycare@kidsklubri.com).*

# ADOPTION ATTORNEY

**Joseph A. Palmieri, Esq.\***

- Step Parent Adoptions
- DCYF Adoptions (will accept DCYF Legal Subsidy as Full Payment)
- FREE Pre-Adoptive Telephone Consultation

**"Just Call"**  
**(401) 258-3371**



\*Joseph A. Palmieri, Esq. is a private attorney and is not associated with DCYF.

## COLLEGE PLANNING BASICS

### Workshop For Foster Parents

College Planning Center of Rhode Island is hosting a FREE informational session on the ins and outs of the college planning process. Educational Counselors will discuss everything from filling out admissions applications to completing the financial aid forms, and how the process may differ for adolescents in state care.

When:

**Tuesday, January 15**  
from 10:00am to 12:00pm  
& 6:30pm to 8:00pm

**Wednesday, January 16**  
from 10:00am to 12:00pm  
& 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Where: Rhode Island Foster Parents Association  
55 South Brow St  
East Providence, RI 02914

RSVP: Please call Natasha Leavitt  
at 438-3900 x 105 by January 12.

## JCYOI JANUARY TRAININGS

### Financial Literacy Training

When: Tuesdays & Thursdays.  
January 8, 10, 15, 17, 22 and 24.

Time: 4:30pm to 6:00pm

Where: Casey Family Services  
1268 Eddy St  
Providence, RI 02905

For more information contact Natasha Leavitt at 438-3900 x 105. For your convenience we have included a copy of the Referral Form on page 4.



## ACT ANNOUNCES WINTER SCHEDULE FOR ACTING CLASSES

All Children's Theatre (ACT), a non-profit, award-winning theatre company dedicated to the education and enrichment of Rhode Island youth, recently announced the organization's School of Drama classes for the Winter of 2008.

ACT School of Drama classes are for children ages 2 – 18 and do not require any previous acting or theatre experience. The eight week session begins in the middle of January and there is space available in each class. Students of all ages can choose a class that focuses on acting or on musical theatre and all classes end with a presentation for family and friends. In addition, ACT now offers beginning and advanced courses. Anyone who is interested in registering can call 401-728-1222 or visit ACTinRI.org for a complete list of classes and locations.

## WE APOLOGIZE

We are sorry if you clipped the Blockbuster coupon in our December issue and made plans to settle down, watch a movie, munch popcorn and sip a Coca-Cola. This official looking coupon came to us via email from a credible source and it was seemingly valid for two DVDs, two 20 ounce Cokes, and popcorn for free.

Shortly after we mailed the December issue of Fostering Futures we found out that Blockbuster stores won't accept the coupon because it is a fraudulent offer circulating online.

We apologize to our families who tried to redeem the coupon. We also apologize to Blockbuster for not verifying the coupon first.

## Susan M. Fink, Attorney

- Adoptions and guardian ad litem matters
- Qualified for DCYF Adoption Subsidy
- 272 - 9666

*The RI Supreme Court does not license or certify any lawyer as an expert or specialist in any field of practice.*



**Call Neighborhood  
to learn about our  
many benefits!**

**1-800-459-6019**



We are proud to partner with **DCYF** and the **RI Foster Parent Association** in supporting foster parents and the children in their care.

# JIM CASEY YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

## REFERRAL FORM

### General Information:

Referral Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of young adult: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Include relationship to young adult)

Has the youth experienced foster care at age 14 or older? YES ( ) ; NO ( )

Current Living Arrangement: \_\_\_\_\_

Caseworker/Region: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Participated in Life Skills Class YES ( ) NO ( )

Does the young adult have a state ID? YES ( ) NO ( )

Does the young adult have a driver's license? YES ( ) NO ( )

Does the young adult have access to their social security card? YES ( ) NO ( )

Does the young person have access to their birth certificate? YES ( ) NO ( )

### Educational Information:

Is the young adult presently in school? YES ( ) NO ( )

Highest Grade Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of present school or GED Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment Information:

Is the young adult currently employed? YES ( ) NO ( )

If yes, provide the name and location where the young adult is employed? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the young adult ever been involved with Work Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.? YES ( ) NO ( )

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Refer this young adult for employment services? YES ( ) NO ( )

### Referral Disposition – for office use only

Status:

Financial Literacy Training: Participate in:

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

  
**The TSETSE Gallery**  
*Building Community Through Art*

101 Orange St., Providence, RI 02903 401.453.3337

**The Youth Advisory Board Gives Back Scholarships Application Form**

The Youth Advisory Board of the TSETSE Gallery, cordially invite you to apply for an art scholarship which will afford children an opportunity to attend Saturday art classes at the TSETSE Gallery. Scholarships are available to students ages 8-15 who are in DCYF care.

Scholarships are valid for four sessions on Saturday from noon to 2PM and include all art supplies. Currently 10 scholarships are available, although additional scholarships will become available as funding is obtained. Scholarship opportunities will be listed quarterly on website: [www.tsetsegallery.org](http://www.tsetsegallery.org)



**Instructions:**

1. Qualifications: Child must be between the ages of 8-15, reside in Rhode Island and be in DCYF care. Selected students will receive 4 Saturday afternoon art classes at the Gallery between the hours of noon and 2pm. All applications must be signed by a parent or guardian.
2. Completely fill out application. Only one application per student.
3. Submit applications to: The TSETSE Gallery, 101 Orange Street, Providence RI 02903. Refer questions to: Sharon Thorpe: 401.453.3337 or e-mail at [tsetse@tsetsegallery.org](mailto:tsetse@tsetsegallery.org)
4. Attach separately a letter of recommendation for scholarship from parent, guardian, clinician or teacher. Please give any information about this student that would justify his/her receiving a scholarship to attend art programs at The Gallery.
5. Please provide at least one copy or original piece of visual art. If you would like the art back, please provide a self-addressed stamped envelope or request it to be held at The TSETSE Gallery for pick up.

**To be filled out by Student**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address & e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer the following questions:**

Why do you want to attend art classes? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What excites you most about art? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you to the youth advisory board members*

**Jordan Bicki, Dennisah Daniel, Chloe Deformonte, Ryan Hartley, Carissa Johnson, Michael Tillinghast and Sara-Lee Tolbert**

*The TSETSE Gallery Youth Advisory Boards Mission is to serve as a voice in promoting the Gallery's mission of "Building Community Through Art." Youth Advisors Work as a team with the Director of Youth Programming to address issues relating to youth and art in the community, while promoting inclusive youth art opportunities at the Gallery.*

continued from cover

Conducted by Harris Interactive, the survey of 1,660 Americans focused specifically on national attitudes toward foster care adoption. Despite the confusion over the foster care adoption process, almost two-thirds (69 percent) of American adults believe society should be doing more to encourage adoption from foster care.

“The findings tell us that Americans embrace foster care adoption as a viable method of expanding families,” said Rita Soronen, executive director of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. “However, it is clear that there is work to be done to dispel the myths that surround the foster care adoption process in order to turn interest into adoption. With so many millions of Americans considering adoption from foster care, there is no reason why there should still be 114,000 children waiting in the system for forever families.”

Foster care adoption is the adoption of a child from the U.S. foster care system whose birthparents’ parental rights have been terminated and is therefore legally available for adoption. There are currently 114,000 waiting children who are eligible for adoption in the U.S. foster care system. Many of these children spend five years or more waiting for a family. Each year, close to 25,000 children in foster care reach the age of 18 without ever finding a permanent family.

The results indicate three areas where the majority of misperceptions exist: the children eligible for adoption in the U.S. foster care system, the adoption process and the types of parents capable of adoption.

- **Beliefs about children in foster care:** Nearly half (45 percent) of Americans currently believe children in foster care have entered the system because of juvenile delinquency. In reality, the vast majority of children enter the foster care system through no fault of their own, as victims of neglect, abandonment and/or abuse.
- **Beliefs about the foster care process:** Two-thirds (67 percent) of those considering adoption are concerned with being sure that the biological parent will not be able to take the child back. In reality, once a child has been legally made available for adoption, birth parents can not claim a child or sue for their return.

Nearly half (46 percent) of all Americans mistakenly believe that foster care adoption is expensive, when in reality adopting from foster care is without sub-



stantial cost and there is financial support available for adoptive parents after the adoption is finalized.

More than one third (36 percent) of Americans are simply confused or unsure about the adoption process as a whole.

**“There are currently 114,000 waiting children who are eligible for adoption in the U.S. foster care system.”**

- **Beliefs about the diversity of parents capable of adoption:** Half of Americans (48 percent) believe that a single parent raising an adoptive child definitely can provide a healthy and loving environment; however 32 percent of children adopted from foster care in 2005 were adopted by single parents or unmarried couples.

Only a third (37 percent) of those surveyed believe a person over the age of 55 definitely can provide a healthy and loving environment for a child. In reality 23 percent of adopted children live with an adoptive parent 55 years of older .

“Misperceptions about foster care adoption create barriers that keep wonderful children from loving adoptive parents,” said Soronen. “We need to inform potential adoptive parents about the need, the affordability and the finality of foster care adoption so we can begin to make strides towards connecting more waiting children in foster care with forever families.”

The survey also shows that three in 10 Americans have considered or are currently considering adoption and 71 percent of that group considers foster care adoption above other forms of adoption, including private infant adoption and international adoption. Those results translate into 48 million Americans who have considered or are currently considering adoption from foster care.

Americans are both familiar with foster care adoption (79 percent) and hold overwhelmingly favorable opinions of it (88 percent). Almost a quarter of Americans (21 percent) have considered foster care adoption at some time during their lives. However, Americans tend to have a relatively negative opinion of the U.S. foster care system. These findings reflect confusion about the process, what it entails, who it involves and what it achieves.

“This survey provides adoption advocates with new insight on the general public’s perception of foster care adoption and the foster care system,” said Humphrey Taylor, chairman of Harris Interactive. “Not only will this data help advocates better communicate with and ultimately recruit potential adoptive parents, but it also points to perceived problems with the foster care adoption system itself so that policymakers, agencies and practitioners better understand what issues need to be addressed.”

Based on the survey findings, The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption recommends the following actions to promote positive change across the foster care adoption landscape.

- Aggressively disseminate the urgency and scope of this issue to the American public to elevate foster care adoption as a critical community, state and national priority.
- Educate the public, the media and policymakers about the realities of foster care adoption relative to its affordability, the finality of the adoptive parent’s custody and the diversity of individuals who can be successful parents.
- Advocate that federal and state policymakers understand and address the long-term financial,



**“The findings tell us that Americans embrace foster care adoption as a viable method of expanding families.”**

educational, medical and mental health support needs of families who adopt from foster care to generate additional safety-nets for adoptive families.

- Inform adoption agencies and practitioners about the critical nature of responding to initial contact from those interested in adopting and supporting their efforts to drive accountable, results-driven quality customer service, from initial phone call to post-adoption support.
- Promote the need for an elevated commitment to child-focused recruitment of adoptive families for the longest-waiting children in the foster care system.

*For more information on the survey and to access the complete results, log on to [www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org](http://www.DaveThomasFoundationforAdoption.org).*



RIFPA

Rhode Island Foster Parents Association  
55 South Brow Street  
East Providence, RI 02914

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web <http://www.rifpa.org> email [rifpa.org@verizon.net](mailto:rifpa.org@verizon.net)

### **Free Child Care & Therapeutic Day Care for Children in Foster Care**

Comp Services offers free preschool to all foster children ages 3, 4, and 5.

Therapeutic Child Care is available for children from toddler through middle school.

We work with over 20 child care centers and family child care homes in RI. We are waiting to offer your foster child a fun and exciting learning experience.

For details call Rita at 401-475-7707 ext. 250 or email [drdaycare@kidsklubri.com](mailto:drdaycare@kidsklubri.com)

## **Foster Parent HelpLine**

The Foster Parent HelpLine is a peer support service that is available statewide. It is staffed by foster parents who understand the issues and situations you face on a daily basis. Foster parents are encouraged to call the helpline with their questions or when they simply need someone to talk to.

**Call the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association's HelpLine:**

**1.800.655.7787**  
*24 Hours.* Your call will be confidential.

A service of the Mentor Program.  
RIFPA STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE MANDATED REPORTERS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT LAWS.



RIFPA

*Fostering Futures* is published monthly by the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association, and partially funded through DCYF, to keep foster parents and others informed and aware of the issues and activities that affect them. Please send your ideas, suggestions, tips, and input via e-mail to: [kara.duffin@rifpa.org](mailto:kara.duffin@rifpa.org), entering "Newsletter" in the subject line, or mail to:

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