

READING CARERS LINK

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

23rd January 9.30 - 16.30

Promoting Sexual Health

Town Hall

Tutor - Debbie Curd

Attachment & Separation

30/31 January 9.30 - 16.30

Wilson Centre

Tutor - Fiona Gren

Mental Health in the Family

8th February 9.30 - 16.30

Wilson Centre

Tutors - Young Minds

Children's Mental Health - The Early Years

8th March - 9.30-16.30

Wilson Centre

Tutors Young Minds

Speak to your link worker now if you would like to attend any of the above courses

XMAS DISCO

Saturday

2nd December

7.0 pm till

10.30 pm

79th Scout

Hall, corner of

Armour

Hill/Kentwood

Hill, Tilehurst.

More details

inside

If you need a lift or require more details please ring

me.- Jill. RCL committee look forward to seeing you there.

NFCA BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 'TO HAVE AND TO HOLD'

Early in November Sonia Waterman and I had the chance to attend this conference in Glasgow. You may recall that there were train derailments, speed restrictions and flooding affecting the rail services. It was not until we arrived at the station that we could be sure we would actually go. We eventually arrived in Glasgow at 11.30 pm having travelled at 20 miles an hour through many stretches of railway. I am glad to say that we were staying at the hotel where

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Dates for your diary |
| 2 | NFCA Biennial Conference |
| 3 | Reminder - Survey forms |
| 4 | Recent courses |
| 5 | Xmas Disco |
| 6 | Education Action Sheet |

the conference was held and it was right beside the railway station. (We didn't feel like doing any more travelling that day). In the morning we first attended the NFCA AGM. The two main topics of conversation here were the proposed change of name from NFCA to Fostering Network and payment for skills for carers.

It looks very likely that the NFCA will vote to change its name to Fostering Network at the extraordinary general meeting in January to reflect its work in the 21st century. There was a lot of discussion about a proposal put forward by a foster carer. The end result was that there was a unanimous vote to adopt an amendment put forward by the NFCA. This amendment is as follows

- a. That NFCA lobby for a nationally agreed policy of the national recommended allowance, not less than NFCA's current minimum recommended allowance.
- b. That NFCA recommend that agencies pay their carers for their skills and competencies 52 weeks per year.
- c. That all agencies provide a training programme for foster carers which

contains a core compulsory element plus additional training opportunities delivered at times and venues to suit the foster care task.

- d. That the Residential Child Care Officer Grade 4 scale be used as a basis for payments for skills schemes.
- e. That all schemes contain the ability for carers to have 4 weeks paid respite per year.
- f. That carers are enabled, by the level of payments paid to them, to pay national insurance contributions and appropriate tax contributions, to ensure that they are able to access pension and welfare benefits
- g. That NFCA together with local authorities and fostering agencies continue to lobby central Government to ensure that foster carers do not lose entitlement to pension rights.

After the AGM we went straight into the conference. This was opened by Harriet Dempster, Director of Social

Work Highland Council. I have a copy of her speech if anyone would like to read it. Sonia and I then split up to attend different workshops. After lunch we heard about the latest position on the National Recruitment Campaign. I am sure that many of you will not be surprised to learn that it has not gone very well so far. The slogan for this campaign is 'Foster Care - Restart a Family'. So far 3500 packs have been requested and only 470 returned an expression of interest. If 10 % of these actually go on to become carers that will be 47 new carers nationally. This is very disappointing; there is still two months of campaigning to go at the time of these statistics so lets hope that advertising in cinemas showing Dinosaur bring forth lots more potential carers. After this information Sonia and I went to another two workshops for the rest of the afternoon. We will tell you what we learnt from the workshops in the next newsletter.

FOSTERING PANEL

Although we are all approved carers, you may be interested to know that there will be a change in the way carers are approved from 1st January 2001.

Carers will be given the opportunity, indeed they will be expected to attend the approval panel. This will give the panel a chance to ask questions of the prospective carers and vice versa. I am sure there would be mixed views from existing carers about whether they would have liked the chance to present themselves to panel.

This gives more details including background, legal and protection issues and placement history. Wherever possible this should be completed before a child becomes looked after or in the case of emergency asap thereafter.

This gives clear objectives for a child's care and a strategy for achieving them. A Care Plan can only be changed at a statutory review.

REMINDER

PLEASE RETURN YOUR SURVEY FORM TO JONANTHAN FISHER WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK

In case any of you are not quite clear about all the initials on the survey form I will go through them as briefly as possible.

PPI

AAR

Assessment and Action Records

Placement Plan Part 1

This records agreement to accommodation, medical treatment and records essential names and addresses. It should be completed before a child is placed.

These records measure seven developmental areas. They are a way of measuring an individual's progress, assess standards of care and make plans for improvement. There are six age related AAR's. They are each a different colour

PPII

AGE	COLOUR
Under 1	Pink
1&2	Violet
3&4	Yellow
5to9	Green
10to14	Blue
15&over	Aquamarine

Placement Plan Part 2

This gives detailed information about child's everyday routine and clarifies contact arrangements. Ideally it should be completed jointly with parents and carers prior to placement. If not it should be completed within 14 days of being placed.

As a rough rule of thumb, if you have a child for more than six months an AAR should be completed. Children over 5 should have a new one completed each year and under 5 every 6 months.

EIR I

Essential Information Record, Part 1

This provides information needed immediately by carers and should be completed before the child is placed.

EIR II

Essential Information Record Part 2

Care Plan

The AAR can be used as a discussion document, a planning tool, data gathering instrument and as a source of outcome evidence with which to evaluate a service. It is really important that the summary sheet in the AAR is brought to the review to clarify issues raised and work to be done.

I have attached an Appendix to the back of this newsletter giving a breakdown of time scales for all of the above.

PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Two weeks ago a few of us joined Jackie Higgs to learn about educational opportunities. In fact there were not enough Danish Pastries to go round. It was good to see more people taking the opportunity to learn. We were given lots of useful handouts and a copy of the magazine 'Breaking their Fall' which you will have seen an article about in this month's Foster Care magazine. This is a very informative magazine produced by the Who Cares Trust. I have attached to this newsletter an action sheet checklist. It would be excellent if you can answer each of these questions positively.

Emotional Abuse & Neglect.

Paul and I attended this course recently. It was well run by Jill Bavin who works for a company called Reconstruct. As well as another foster carer there were health care workers, social workers, residential workers, Family Centre workers and an Aftercare worker. We found it really helpful and very interesting to train with lots of other professionals. Probably for me the most difficult thing to do during the course was to examine a case study and decide if the parenting was good enough and assess risks to children. Not an easy task.

INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR

Last weekend Paul and I attended this course in South Street. It was very popular with 18 attendees. We were a mixture of foster carers adopters and a couple who are expected to become Reading's first Community Parents. The handouts for this course were generated by all of us who attended and we have not received

them yet. However, I can tell you that we looked at Cognitive development which in layman's terms is a triangle covering thoughts, feelings and resulting behaviour. In the middle of the triangle is all the background beliefs values and learned behaviour that we grow up with. In recognising what causes people to behave in certain ways allows us to understand it and gives a starting point to work from. We also looked at the Cycle of Change which was broken down into six areas and how we might assist someone to change certain behaviours. We all had to work in different groups and draw on each others experiences. The day was a good opportunity for meeting 'old' carers and getting to know 'new' ones. Some of the adopters found that in some of the exercises they were looking at things from a totally different angle to the foster carers.



The committee would be very pleased to accept any articles for a future newsletter

Reading Carers Link operate a policy of non discriminatory practice. It is our policy that there

should be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital status or disability.

You can e mail your views, questions articles and opinions to

paul.hughes22@ntlworld.com

RCL COMMITTEE

Chairman MARTIN CONIBEAR (0118 3773510
Vice Chairman PAUL HUGHES (0118 9678916
Secretary JILL HUGHES (0118 9678916
Committee Member SONIA WATERMAN (0118 9613224
Committee Member DEBBIE CONIBEAR (0118 3773510

CHRISTMAS



ALL WELCOME, ITS FREE

Saturday

2nd December 2000

at

79th Scout Hall

***Corner of Armour Hill/Kentwood Hill,
Tilehurst***

7.00 pm to 10.30pm

***FREE finger buffet + soft drinks, you
may bring your own tipple***

FREE CAR PARK

Name :

No of Adults:

No of Children:

***Please pass to link worker, Jayne Kulan or Jill Hughes
or phone 01189 9678916***