



Kinship Quarterly

Strengthening Families

July 2019

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Preparing for the Upcoming School Year and Literacy

Welcome to the 3rd Kinship Quarterly for 2019! Although children are out for summer, we are focused on getting children off to a good start for the upcoming school year. This edition includes legislative changes affecting your child's education and what you should know about enrolling them for the upcoming school year. Also, ECI talks about the importance of literacy. As always check out our safety tips for this season and resources that will help you care for your child.

2019 Legislative Changes



Do you have a youth or young adult that is in college or plans to attend college? New legislation was passed in the recent 86th regular session that will benefit youth in your care.

House Bill 1702 requires state funded colleges, technical schools and universities (institutions of higher education) to collect names of current or former youth in foster care and provide those names to the foster care liaison to assist and provide support to those students. Institutions of higher education must also publicize (include on website, social media, mail, etc.) foster care liaison contact information

and available support services by January 2020.

House Bill 3808 requires institutions of higher education to designate at least one person (may be foster care liaison) to provide students with resource information such as parenting and child care resources, transportation assistance, employment assistance, financial counseling, resources offered by the institution, etc. Also, requires institutions to create a program to employ students while they are in college in an area of their career interest.

Foster Care Liaison contact information can be found on the College For All Texans website at this link: www.collegeforalltexas.com

DFPS Contact for more information is Gaye Vopat, Transitional Living Services Team Lead, gaye.vopat@dfps.state.tx.us or 512-438-5442.

Upcoming School Year



- All students in DFPS conservatorship must be enrolled in an accredited local

public school within 2 days of placement.

- Students in foster care are eligible to participate in the free Federal Breakfast and Lunch program. Eligibility is based on the child's income, (which is 0) not the family's income
- Children ages 3, 4, and 5 in DFPS/CPS conservatorship as a result of an adversary hearing, are eligible for the free pre-kindergarten programs offered at local public schools. Contact the Regional Education Specialist for a Letter of Verification.
- ALL students in care receive an EDUCATION PORTFOLIO at the time of placement. The green binder contains enrollment documents, transcripts, report cards, and school work. Please keep the EDUCATION PORTFOLIO current and provide copies of materials to the worker.
- Every Texas school district has named a FOSTER CARE LIAISON to facilitate enrollment and services for students in conservatorship. Foster Care Liaison can enroll students in the free National Breakfast and Lunch Program and secure previous school records.

EARLYCHILDHOOD INTERVENTION**Literacy for the Young Child**

ECI services support families as they learn how to help their children grow and learn. One way that we can all help young children to develop is by introducing books. Books are a great avenue that can help increase literacy for children of all ages including 0 to 3 years of age.

Encouraging children to interact with books appropriately can give them valuable skills as they transition into the school system. One may ask how adults can be effective in teaching language and literacy when working with children who have developmental delays. It's easy! Adults can set up a small area just about anywhere and incorporate books, pillows, stuffed animals and a few decorations. A writing center can also be set up in close proximity. Several skills can be taught to a child just from having an area designated for reading and writing. These skills can be brought over to the school system when the child enters a structured classroom with other children. The skill sets gained are as follows:

- The child will understand the importance of books. Initially, a child may not know how to interact with books and may put them in their mouths every time they are around one or put writing materials/paper in their mouth, but an adult can properly show the child how to use the book or writing materials. For instance, if a 6 month old puts the book in his or her mouth, the adult can redirect and say, "this is a book" and open it up and point to 2 or 3 pictures and say the names at least 2 or 3 times each. Each time the child is exposed to this, he or she will start to correlate the book with learning. Eventually the child will open the book, point to a picture and then try and say it or at least utter vocalizations. After pointing to pictures in books, the adult can work with the child on drawing one picture that he or she looked at. Now, the child is learning skills so the picture may not be drawn to scale but they are making an effort. This is called increasing language and literacy for the young child.
- The young child will understand boundaries. Classroom settings have many boundaries that are adhered to for safety and to have conducive learning environments. When the child is continuously going to one area often to gain access to books or to write, they begin to learn that if he or she wants a book or wants to write, they can just go to the designated area. This designation of space helps the child to communicate effectively even if he or she cannot speak. The parent or any adult working with the child can simply ask, what would you like and the child can go over to the area of choice if they are capable. Of course this will take modeling. The adult will have to continuously act out, I want a book and then go over to the book area or I want to write and then go over to the writing area. This will continue until the child starts to comprehend what is happening. If a child is not going over on their own,

the adult can always take the child over to each area and work on activities.

When looking at various age groups, below you will find examples of books that are appropriate for the young child.

Infants 0-6 months

- Books with simple, large pictures or designs with bright colors.
- Stiff cardboard, "chunky" books, or fold out books that can be propped up in the crib.
- Cloth and soft vinyl books with simple pictures of people or familiar objects that can go in the bath or get washed.

Infants 6-12 months

- Board books with photos of other babies.
- Brightly colored "chunky" board books to touch and taste!
- Books with photos of familiar objects like balls and bottles.
- Books with sturdy pages that can be propped up or spread out in the crib or on a blanket.
- Plastic/vinyl books for bath time.
- Washable cloth books to cuddle and mouth.
- Small plastic photo albums of family and Friends.

Young Toddlers 12-24 months

- Sturdy board books that they can carry.
- Books with photos of children doing familiar things like sleeping or playing.
- Goodnight books for bed time.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.
- Books with only a few words on each page.
- Books with simple rhymes or predictable text.
- Animal books of all sizes and shapes.

Toddlers 2-3 years

- Books that tell simple stories.
- Simple rhyming books that they can memorize.
- Bed time books.
- Books about counting, the alphabet, shapes, or sizes.
- Animal books, vehicle books, books about playtime.
- Books with their favorite TV characters inside.
- Books about saying hello and good-bye.

Reach out and

Read: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilazGpNlsGw>

<https://neurosciencenews.com/mri-early-reading-brain-activity-1996/>

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/13-things-babies-learn-when-we-read-them>

The Importance of Oral

Language: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_K_8C_KjKj0

We should be reading out loud to every

kid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBuT2wdYtpM>

Summer Safety Tips

Reduce the number of deaths from heatstroke by remembering to ACT.

1. Avoid heatstroke-related injury and death by never leaving a child alone in a car, not even for a minute. And make sure to keep your car locked when you're not inside so kids don't get in on their own.
2. Create reminders. Keep a stuffed animal or other memento in your child's car seat when it's empty, and move it to the front seat as a visual reminder when your child is in the back seat. Or place and secure your phone, briefcase or purse in the backseat when traveling with your child.
3. Take action. If you see a child alone in a car, call 911. Emergency personnel want you to call. They are trained to respond to these situations

https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/heatstroke

Walking and Biking Safety

Younger children are learning to become independent. They enjoy walking, riding bikes and playing outside, but they don't have the judgment to cope with traffic by themselves yet. Learn to keep your kids safe when they are on the move.

Sun Safety for Babies

Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight. Move your baby to the shade under a tree, umbrella or stroller canopy. Dress babies in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs, and use brimmed hats.

Internet Safety Tips for Children, Youth and Teens

- Don't give anyone your password, name, address, the name of your school or any information about your family
- Don't talk to strangers
- Don't agree to meet anyone in person
- Don't fill in a profile that asks for your name and address
- Don't visit a chat room without an adult's permission
- Don't stay online if you see something you think your parents won't like
- Don't post pictures of yourself without permission
- Do not download or install anything on your computer without permission
- If you are talking to someone online and they make you uncomfortable, remember you don't have to talk back to them

<https://www.mcgruff-safe-kids.com/2014/08/10-internet-safety-tips-for-kids/>



Resources

- DFPS Kinship Care Facebook www.facebook.com/TexasKinshipCaregivers
- Summer Food Program Site Locator: <http://www.squaremeals.org/Programs/SummerFeedingPrograms/SummerFeedingInteractiveMap.aspx>
- Summer Camp Locator: http://www.kidscamps.com/summer_camps/texas-summer-camps.html
- Summer Camp Information <http://www.campsusa.org/resources/>
- YMCA Camps <http://www.ymca.net/find-a-y-camp/>
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America <https://www.bgca.org>
- Aunt Bertha- Resource Locator: https://www.auntbertha.com/?fbclid=IwAR2m0snvYJnjZjJ4vlyRmx1Ax4XuRoB2vhJ28utp7IDJeDvoIpP_ii9nSCs
- Sesame Street-Foster Care Resources https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/foster-care/?fbclid=IwAR2yFzxcnRoSGwzdRhcQVLeBKxR1XteeRvNthC_nY_b_LKocwlsfXookhSc
- Steps to Become a Foster Parent: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/AdoptionandFosterCare/GetStarted/steps.asp>

Region 7 Easter Egg Hunt

Easter 2019, the Kinship Program in Region 7 (Austin Area) hosted their annual Easter Egg Hunt. It was a quite a large turnout and fun was had by all.

