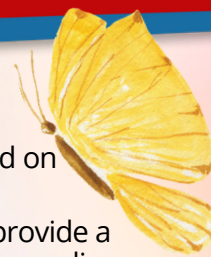


LOUISIANA FOSTER CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

"You Care for Kids, We Care for You!"
2022 April Issue



Margie Nielsen

Foster Care Ambassador
North & Central LA
(318) 215-7070

Margie@LouisianaFosterCare.com

**Foster Caregiver, as your
Ambassador I am here
just for you and to deliver
these support services:**

- Family Preservation Support
- Foster Caregiver Monthly Virtual Support Group Meetings
- Connections to Resources and Support in your Community
- TBRI® Coaching for the family
- Event and Activity Information
- Training and Educational Opportunities
- Regional Communication via Remind®, Email, and Facebook



Helpful Resources

Louisiana Fosters
LouisianaFosters.la.gov/directory

Quality Parenting Initiative
QPI4Kids.org

**Louisiana Child Welfare
Training Academy**
LCWTA.org

Foster Care Advisory Board (FCAB)

DCFS announced the creation of the new Foster Care Advisory Board on February 24, 2022.

DCFS values the voices of the families we serve, and this board will provide a platform for certified caregivers to partner with the agency to improve policy and practice. This is one of the ways DCFS is seeking to live out its values: Treating all people with dignity, compassion, and respect while providing services with integrity. The FCAB will consist of caregivers selected from each region of the state and will represent the diversity of the foster families served by the department.

The advisory board will assist the department with establishing or altering policy and practice by providing critical feedback from the perspectives of certified foster parents and relative caregivers. The FCAB will carry out its work through three subcommittees: Communication, Policy, and Support and Training.

The names of the new board members will be announced soon!


May is National Foster Care Month!

The Children's Bureau uses this time to renew its commitment and awareness of the more than 407, 000 children and youth in foster care in the United States. It's also a time to acknowledge the tremendous love, care, and support that foster caregivers provide every day to children and youth in foster care.

In Louisiana, on any given day, there are over 3,300 children and youth in foster care. We want to take a moment and express our sincere appreciation to the committed families and staff that work tirelessly to ensure that each child or youth has a safe, stable, loving home regardless of where that child or youth may live. We also want to thank the numerous volunteers and support organizations that diligently seek to meet the specific needs of children and youth and the families that care for them. Louisiana is very fortunate to have committed foster caregivers, volunteers, and support organizations that put the needs of our children and youth first. For that, we say a big THANK YOU!

This year's National Foster Care Month campaign focuses on strengthening relative and kin connections and the positive impact these relationships have on maintaining family and cultural ties for children and youth in foster care. To learn more, visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/>.



**Your region has a lot to offer; you can stay up-to-date
through  remind texts directly from your Ambassador!**

To sign up text the number and message below for your region:

- Monroe - Send a text to 81010 Text this message @monroereg
- Shreveport - Send a text to 81010 Text this message @shreveereg
- Alexandria - Send a text to 81010 Text this message @alexregion



@LAFCSO



LouisianaFosterCare.com





Foster Caregiver Monthly Virtual Support Group Meetings for each region in north Louisiana. Join us by using this Lifesize link <https://call.lifesizecloud.com/6943903> or by calling (312) 584-2401 Meeting Ext: 6943903#

- **Alexandria-** 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on the 1st Thursday of each month
- **Monroe-** 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on the 2nd Thursday of each month
- **Shreveport-** 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on the 3rd Thursday of each month
(If dates or times change, a post will be made on our Facebook page)

Widen Your Circle of Support

Like and Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date meetings and resource information. Search @LAFCSO or scan the QR Code



One Minute Parenting Tips

Parenting in 100 Words

Encourage Teens to Tell Stories

<https://bit.ly/100-words-stories>

Melissa Ford /Parenting in 100 Words June 22, 2021

Your teen is in a constant act of attempting to answer the internal question, "Who am I?" through the stories they tell themselves and others. They've gone from tiny human beings having stories told about them ("You'll never guess what they did today, Grandma!") to larger human beings making sense of their past, present, and future through storytelling. Jordan Booker at the Positive Youth Development Lab tells us to encourage teens to tell us about their world and share stories from our own. It will help your teen better understand who they are and where they've come from.

Courtesy of the Center for Parent and Teen Communication, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. © 2021 The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. All rights reserved.

Louisiana Family Resource Centers

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) diligently works to find and partner with organizations across the state who provide resources to Louisiana foster caregivers. One of the many partnered resources available to you is Family Resource Centers.

The experienced staff of the Family Resource Centers (FRC) in the Monroe, Shreveport, and Alexandria regions are here to connect with you to provide a means of support based on the specific needs of your family.

Some of the most common resources shared with families include:

- Information, Referral, and Advocacy Services
- Family Skill Building and Educational Groups
- Placement Support
- Parenting Classes (DCFS approved for training hours, ask about child care)

Contact the FRC office below in your parish to be connected to resources in your community.

Children's Coalition for Northeast LA- Phone: (318) 323-8775

Parishes served: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll

Community Support Programs, Inc.- Phone: (318) 865-1422

Parishes served: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Jackson, and Webster

Project Celebration, Inc.- Phone: (318)256-6242

Parishes served: DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Vernon

North Volunteers of America (VOA)- Phone: (318) 442-8026 Extension 525

Parishes served: Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, and Winn



IMPORTANT → Foster Parent Training Hours Due by May 31st!

Each family must have 15 in-service training hours; if there is a 2-parent household, each spouse must have 5 hours each and the other 5 hours can be completed by one or both spouses. Please visit the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy website for online training opportunities at <https://www.lcwta.org/> and watch for emails for other training opportunities! Please also be reminded that any on-the-job training can be reviewed for credit if it pertains to the health, safety and well-being of children. Check with your Home Development worker for more information.

Fun TBRI® tips

Create A Sensory Calm Down Corner

<https://child.tcu.edu/tbri-mantra-part-i/#sthash.aHzjNltK.dpbs>

Emmelie Pickett/TBRI Mantra: Part I February 13, 2017

Creating a sensory calm down corner can serve as the time-in spot when implementing Calming Engagement.

Involve the child/teen in the process of deciding where in the home to place the calm corner. Make sure it's in a common area of the home - not a bedroom or other secluded place. Encourage them to think of what calming items should be kept in the calm corner.

Have a discussion explaining that we all experience strong emotions from time to time and when those emotions become too intense, the calm corner is a safe place to go to self-regulate.

The Rees-Jones Director of the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, Dr. David Cross developed his own TBRI® Mantra for parents and professionals to use when working with their children:

- Stay calm no matter what.
- See the need behind the behavior.
- Find a way to meet the need.
- Don't quit. If not you, then who?



"When I think of ways to stay calm, I think of breathing. Just taking a deep breath can help us to stay calm. It's also important to be willing to do or say nothing but to just stay in the moment with your child. If you need to walk away for a moment to calm yourself, that's okay." – Dr. David Cross

ATTENTION Foster Caregivers!

Becoming a foster parent is life-changing, exciting, and rewarding! At times it can be overwhelming, stressful, and isolating. New and veteran foster parents experience these feelings during their journey, which is natural.

- What if you could share your experiences, good or bad, in a judgment-free and confidential environment? **You can!**
- What if there was someone you could talk to, someone who understands what you're experiencing? **There is!**

The Louisiana Foster Caregiver Mentor Program was developed for this very purpose. As a foster caregiver, you have a unique opportunity to be paired with someone who can encourage, support, and empower you. Being matched with a veteran foster parent can help you navigate challenging times and celebrate the good ones. This can make the difference between moving forward successfully or bailing out altogether. There are times that even the most experienced foster parents may need extra support; we are here for you too! These are just a few of the amazing benefits of the program.

Our established programs are in the Monroe, Alexandria, and Covington regions. We will expand into more regions in the near future. If you're interested in learning more about the program as a *Mentor* or *Mentee*, contact your Home Development Worker or Ambassador in one of the following ways:

- 1) Call or Email your Home Development Worker
- 2) Call or Email Margie Nielsen, North & Central Louisiana Ambassador-
Margie@LouisianaFosterCare.com (318) 215-7070



Support Organization Meetings

Are you looking for a support organization in your area?

Below you will find a list of active support organizations in the Monroe, Shreveport, and Alexandria regions. If there isn't a group within a reasonable distance and/or you would like to discuss starting one in your area, contact your Ambassador for assistance. We are here to help!

Here are a few benefits that come with joining a foster caregiver support group:

- Connect with fellow foster caregivers
- Gain knowledge and experience
- Share resources
- Special training opportunities
- Family events

Monroe Region

The Well

Tara Stone - Ruston
(318) 232-2865
tara@thewellministries.cc

Alexandria Region

CenLa Foster Parent Support Group (Fostering Community)
info@fosteringcommunity.org

Shreveport Region

Shreveport Regional Foster Parent Association

Stacy Eppers
(318) 572-1295

QPI Faith Based Community Group

Courtney Sanders
courtney.sanders.dcms@la.gov

Like and Follow us on Facebook for up-to-date meetings and resource information.

Search @LAFCSO or scan the QR Code



Louisiana Parentline- A great resource for foster caregivers!

Specialists can offer emotional support, de-escalation, crisis intervention, information, and referrals.

Other ways the Parentline can help caregivers include homework and school challenges, behavior issues, food needs, child development, homelessness, parenting tips, financial hardships, relationship concerns, crisis intervention, and family illness. Parentline can also help you with much more.