

# Foster Parent Associations/Leadership

- Benefits of a Foster Parent Association
- Benefits of Leadership
- Establishing and Successfully Utilizing a Foster Parent Association

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# *Benefits of a Foster Parent Association*

## 1. Support To Caregivers

- Help with difficult placements
- Grief and Loss when a child leaves
- Support during transitions
- Assist foster parents with the court process and completing caregiver court forms
- Gives foster children an opportunity to be involved with other kids who are going through their same life experiences.



The ability to identify with others who have been through it themselves and understand.

## 2. Mentorship & Advocacy



- Experienced foster parents guiding and leading those foster parents new to the system
- Ensuring foster parents have a place they can go when they are unsure of a question or need a specific answer
- Identifying and working on resolution to common system problems and issues
- Achieving and maintaining Quality Caregivers for foster children (QPI)

### 3. Trainings



- Ensures quality caregiving by making foster parents aware of ongoing changes to both local and state licensing regulations.
- Ensures foster parents receive their ongoing mandated training hours.
- Provide trainings that others may not have or identify with.
- Utilizing skilled professionals as trainers.  
(Many will provide their expertise at no cost.)
- Providing childcare, giveaways and snacks can encourage foster parent attendance.

# Training Topic Suggestions

## Make them applicable to what we do

*Prudent Parent Standard* – What it is and what flexibility it gives to foster parents when they are making decisions regarding normalizing life for kids.

*Effects of substance abuse on children* – effects of living with drug and alcohol exposure for children both before and after birth.

*Domestic Violence Effects* - how living in a domestic violence home affects children and creates hypervigilance.

*Effects of Neglect* - what happens to children when their needs are not met?

## Training Topic Suggestions-continued

*Trauma Informed Parenting for Children* – giving a better understanding of what neglect, abuse and trauma can do to children and how it affects their behaviors and thought process.

*Tax Information for Foster Parents* – (H & R Block)

*Facilitating Birth Parent Visitations*

*Best First Placements for kids* – utilize placement workers to talk about knowing if a child is the right placement for a specific foster family. This also allows foster parents and placement workers to meet each other in person.

## 4. Networking & Sharing of Information

- Ensure distribution of ACIN's from State
- Provide a respite network
- Distribute information via an association email list
- Promote activities, events and share information via a group Facebook page
  - Suggest it be a members only page and monitored by an association leader.
  - No identification of foster children through pictures or names (i.e. San Diego County Foster Parent Association, Straight From The Heart Inc.)

## **5. Accepting Donations** (Requires non-profit status)

- Allows donors to receive tax deductions for contributions using your tax id number
- Allows association to receive and give away merchandise and monetary donations to foster children such as clothing, school supplies, shoes, tickets to events, toys for Christmas, scholarship funds and much more.
- Accurate recordkeeping of what is received and disbursed is of the utmost importance.



# Starting a Foster Parent Association

1. Select a Board of Directors –  
President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, etc.
2. Schedule regular board and association meeting times (monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.)
3. Keep minutes and records of each meeting (who was present, location, time of meeting, items discussed and voted on, if decisions are made)
4. May or may not choose to require dues for membership. (Recordkeeping is important if you do.)

## Establish a Website

- Keep it updated regularly, informing the community and foster parents of what you are doing for and in the lives of children.
- Post pictures of events and activities (no foster children identifiable).
- List upcoming meetings, events, trainings, support groups, giveaways, contact phone numbers, and encourage others to request to be placed on your email distribution list.
- Thank donors who have contributed to your success.

Some examples:

[www.straightfromtheheartinc.org](http://www.straightfromtheheartinc.org)

[www.connectedthroughkids.com](http://www.connectedthroughkids.com)

## Keeping People Involved

- Invite and encourage foster parents and caregivers to meetings and events.
- Keep a list of volunteers to help with events, giveaways, writing thank you notes to donors, etc.
- Have committees for those community members and foster parents who want to help and be involved.
- Keep contact with foster parents through email.
- Make the community aware of your association and it's needs, list ways they can help.
- Thank your donors to ensure they come back.
- Keep accurate records for auditing purposes.

# To Achieve Non-Profit Status

Start a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization to receive tax deductible monetary and cash donations

\*In CA must have both State and Federal status approval and the process can take up to one year. Requires finances up front that can be reimbursed when non profit status is received.

1. Select a Board of Directors.
2. Select a name for your organization.
3. File Articles of Incorporation and receive a corporation number.
4. Start the State and Federal Application process.

May hire someone to do it or purchase online products to do it yourself – some include a book with sample forms and a CD to walk you through the process.

When you receive your non profit status approval:

5. Hire a tax professional to file your tax return annually and ask financial questions of.
6. Use an accurate bookkeeping program.
7. Know the laws to ensure you do not lose your non-profit status.

# You're Ready To Go!!

## Now you can:

1. Accept product donations – clothes, shoes, school supplies, backpacks, toys and gifts for holidays, gift cards, food and drinks for picnics or other events.
2. Accept financial donations.
3. Apply for grant funding.
4. Provide assistance to foster families and keep them informed and prepared.
5. Help ensure Quality Parenting (QPI) at it's finest!!

## Things to remember!!

1. Let others help and be a part of the association's success.
2. Always thank your donors in writing – assigning this job to a specific person helps. It keeps your donors donating.
3. Keep accurate records of financial and in-kind donations.
4. Your work may not always seem recognized but in the big picture you are helping children and making their lives better!!

# QUESTIONS

Team Work



Training



Support



Quality Parenting

